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ZZAP! AMIGA

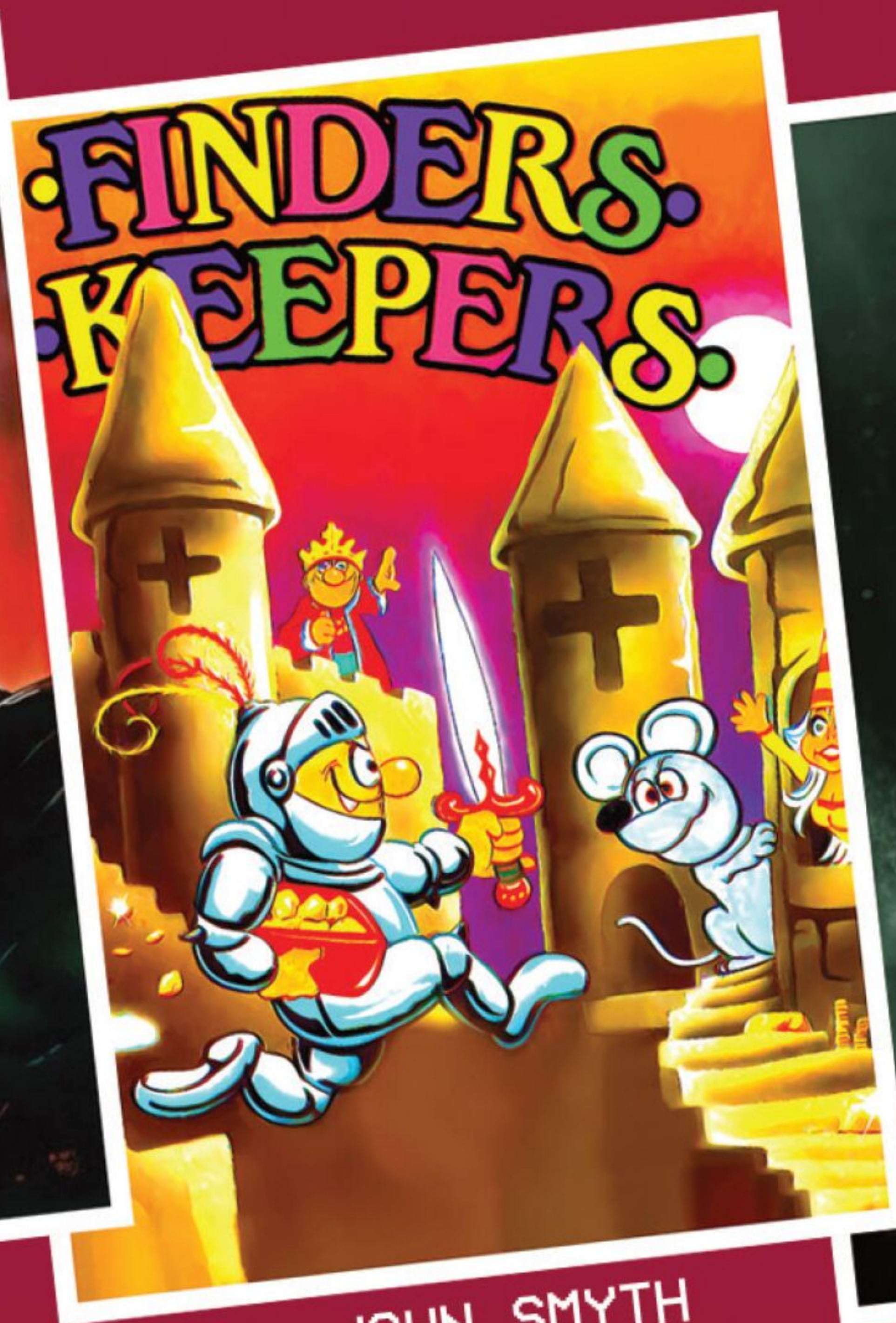
MICRO ACTION

COMMODORE

AMIGA AT THE ARCADES
TIM WRIGHT'S MEMOIRES
SCORPION ENGINE
THE ZZAP! AMIGA FILES



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Arcade Fantastic



Happy New Year to you all, and welcome to a fresh new issue of ZZAP! AMIGA.

In this issue we start a new feature series documenting the AMIGA's relationship with the arcades. Our first two parts will examine the original arcade conversions developed in the late 80s/early 90s. Back then, arcade emulation wasn't possible, and we relied on developers of the day to provide us with accurate conversions to quench our thirst for playing our favourite games in the comfort of our own homes. The capability of the AMIGA brought huge potential of arcade-perfect ports, but there seemed to be more disappointments than pleasurable experiences. *Out Run* and *Side Arms* are two that

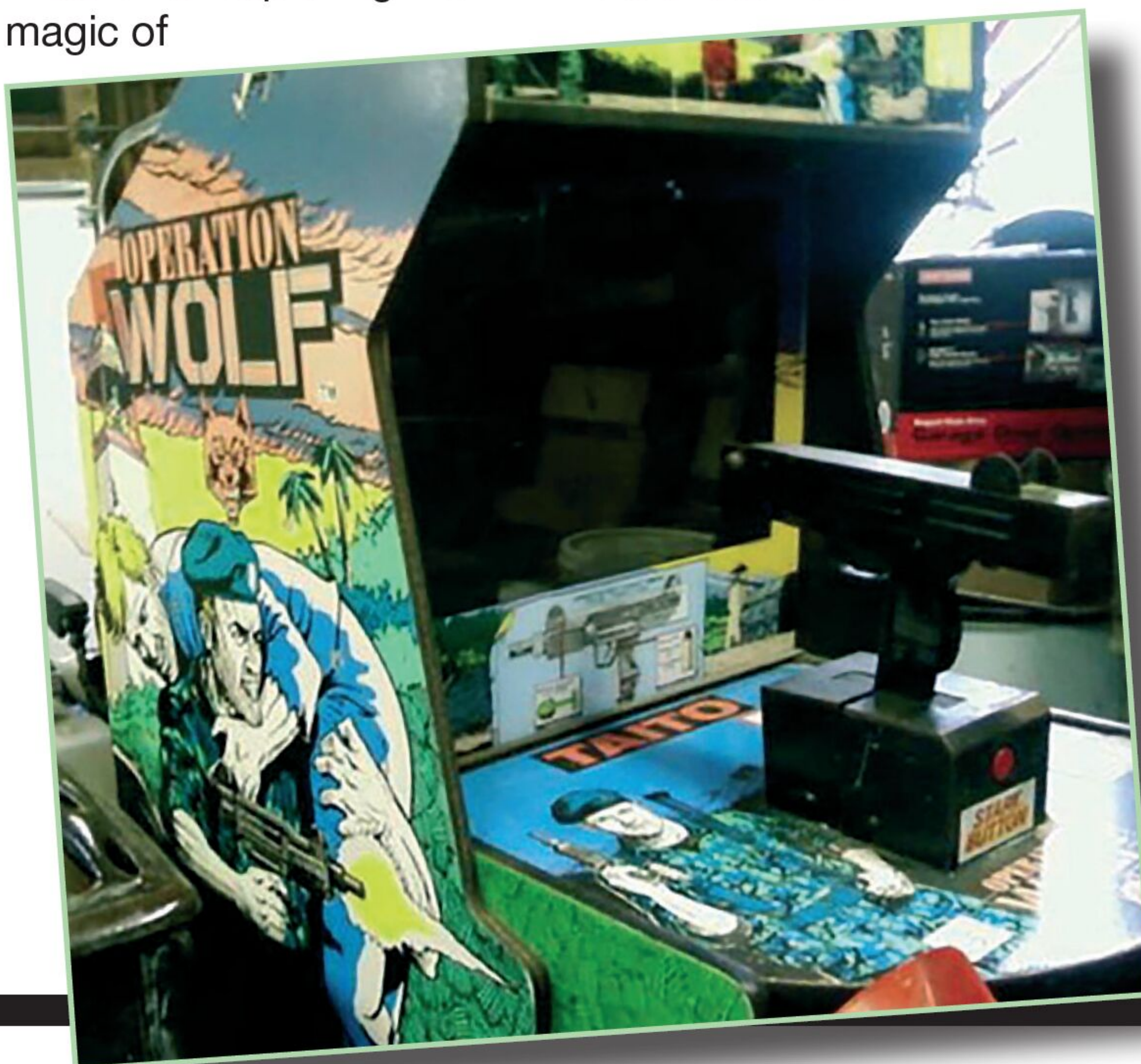


spring to mind, but we will cover both sides of the coin as we look back in this series.

In later episodes, we will look at the new wave of arcade conversions which developers have created without the pressures of greedy publishers or release deadlines. Access to emulation, tools to extract graphics and reverse engineer code, and game creation environments such as Scorpion Engine, used on modern PCs, have made the technical process more achievable. However, the X-factor of capturing the magic of

the original is still elusive to many.

That magical feeling of entering an arcade and experiencing the sounds and lights of all the games and machines is something I feel only our generation truly appreciates. I've seen young kids and families in Arcade Club venues in England, but the basketball hoops and dance mats are the main attraction, although the driving games always get attention. But the stand-up cabinets showing attract modes of the likes of *Zaxxon*, *R-Type*, *Q-Bert*... I feel they are reserved





for those reading this magazine. I worry this part of our cultural history may be lost to museums in 25-30 years, so any excuse to relive these glory days!

So whilst many moan and groan about seeing a constant trickle of arcade conversions still rolling out on AMIGA, it keeps the games and experiences alive, and long may they live on...

Mame

Editor Correction Centre

Last November I hit the ‘big 50’, and age must be getting the better of me as there were a couple of mistakes that found their way into the final mag.

The most important was the incorrect recognition of one of our fine art pieces. The haunting picture to



our right should have been titled: *Under Cover of Darkness*, and credited to **Radoslaw Wasielewski (2023)**.

You really need to know who to blame! Here is our panel of games reviewers – all kids (at heart)

CHRIS THACKER

Amiga and Amstrad fan, owner of enough computer and console stuff that he could open up a branch of CEX, and contributor to various mags, inc. Popular Retro, Metro, Crash and others. Supporter of up-and-coming creators, and generally the kind of person you’d want to share a pint with!



THIS MONTH

Christmas was kind to me with a barrage of addictive board games, the odd box set LP and the delivery of the Spectrum Next. Alas my Christmas wish didn’t quite make it into Santa’s sack this month. but there’s always next year! This month i’ve been playing: Stuntman Seymour, as well as the recent Aquabyss update.

MARK MACRAE

Huge fan of all things C64, Amiga and arcade. As well as playing games, and writing for ZZAP! Amiga, Mark will solder C64s together and make bartop arcade cabinets with bits of wood and a Raspberry Pi.



THIS MONTH

Enjoying the warm weather here, and getting out swimming and walking. Entertaining visiting relatives, training my daughter for cross-country running, and sipping oat milk flat whites. Sadly, I am back to work on the 8th January, but the silver lining is a trip to Australia in a few weeks time.

ANDREW FISHER

Commodore 64 fan, regular contributor to *Retro Gamer*, owner of several Amigas and classic consoles, over 40 years of gaming experience.



THIS MONTH

Playing the *HeroQuest* board game I got for Christmas, enjoying the new Rogue-like PC game *Mining My Business* in early access, and planning to attend retro events later in the year.

PAUL MORRISON

Gaming since the 70s, but Commodore machines have his heart. Owner of a C64 and an Amiga 1200, and can often be found deep in a manky, disgusting dungeon. In an Amiga RPG, not real life!!



THIS MONTH

Fretting over a job application/interview prep. Aside from that, made some good progress with writing a book, and succumbed to the lure of the Taito Super Pocket. I’m sure I’ll be buying the Team 17 cartridge for it before too long...



N·E·W·S f·l·a·s·h·



...with David "Jazzcat" Simmons,
Hot data for vintage hardware!

TAITO

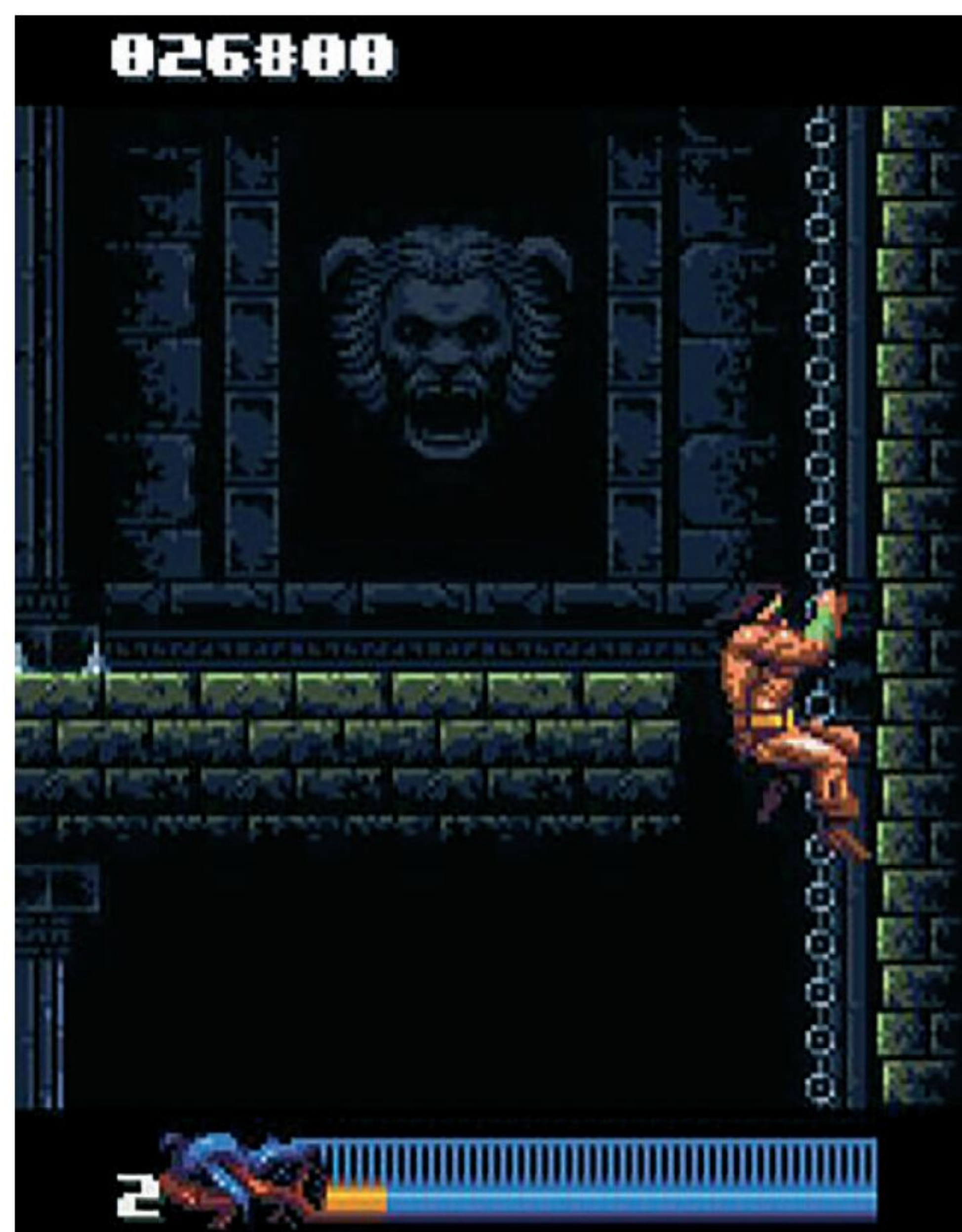


Originally debuting in arcades back in 1987, Taito's *Rastan* stood out as a premier fantasy platformer, blending swords, sorcery, and hack-and-slash action.

After an intensive eight-month endeavour, the Amiga iteration of *Rastan* emerges. An alpha demo of the inaugural level showcases remastered sprites and freshly reimagined backgrounds, all running

on a standard Amiga 500 bolstered with an additional 512KB of RAM.

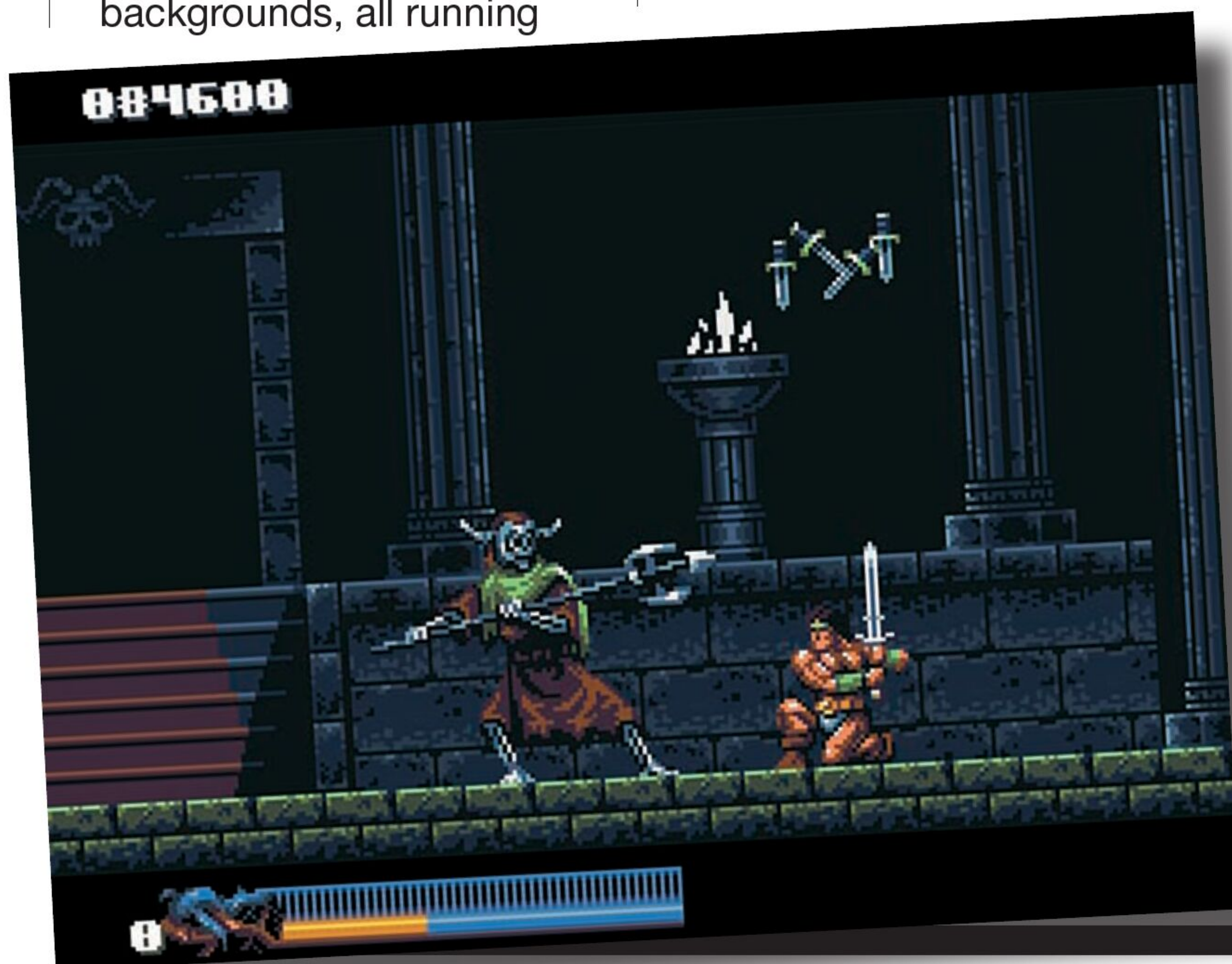
Speaking about the motivation driving this port, basementApe shares, "My aim isn't to replicate the arcade version of *Rastan* on the Amiga; rather, it's about creating the most compelling adaptation of *Rastan* achievable within the capabilities of the A500. The A500 boasted numerous strengths for its era, yet handling a multitude of moving sprites simultaneously, as the arcade does, isn't among its strong suits. Memory constraints, particularly the meagre 512KB



allocated for graphics and audio, pose a significant challenge. Hence, my focus on reworking the backgrounds to fit within this limited chip memory alongside enemies, music, and sound effects."

Additionally, basementApe critiques the arcade's graphics, acknowledging the proficiency of the artists but highlighting the disparity in creating visuals for CRT screens using outdated tools, resulting in a cluttered and vivid appearance, less conducive to modern displays.

Immersing in the artistry of pixel creation within the A500's limitations is a





source of joy for basementApe. Operating within the 12-bit colour range and a 16-colour palette offers a unique creative experience, eschewing higher colour depths for improved performance.

Employing the Scorpion Engine, *Rastan* will boast music and sound effects contributed by JMD (Simone Bernacchia), basementApe (Erik Thon), and Tsak (John Tsakiris).

The game is structured into six distinct rounds, each comprising three areas.

As *Rastan*, an ex-thief and murderer, players embark on a left-to-right scrolling journey, slicing, jumping, and climbing through diverse land-

scapes, culminating in a showdown with a formidable boss at

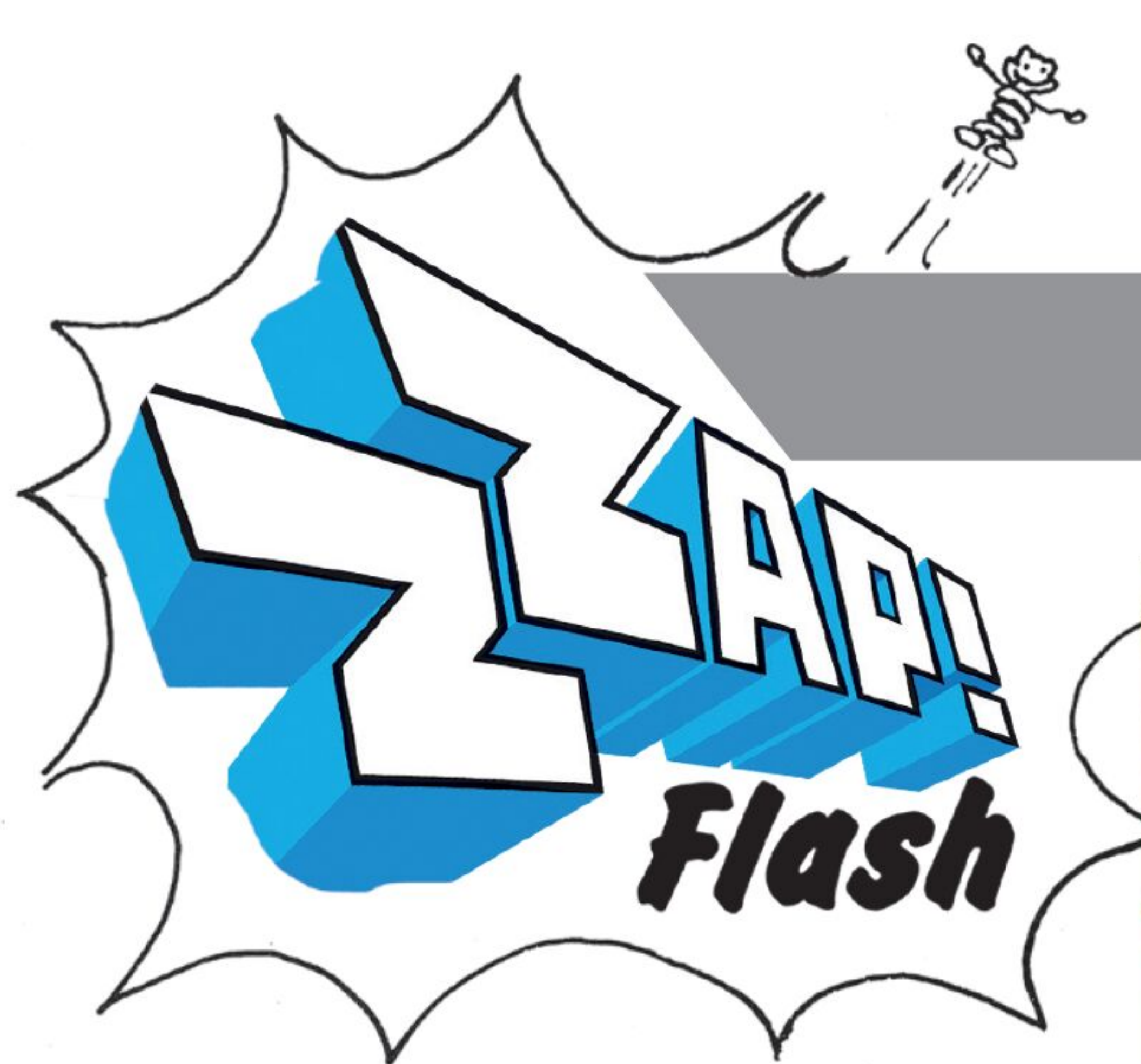
the round's conclusion.

<https://basementape.itch.io>

Rogue Declan Zero

Still sizzling from the last issue, *Rogue Declan Zero* received another update in November, just after going to press with issue 13. Nivrig has made the following tweaks to his excellent game, which you can download from: <https://nivrig.itch.io/rogue-declan-zero>

- Added an in-game options menu accessed with ESC or CD32 PAUSE
- Fixed all shots disappearing when the Quit key was pressed
- Fixed graphical glitches when a chest spawned beside a pit
- Fixed rare generation of floor tiles connected only at the diagonal corners
- Other map generation refinements
- Shot system optimisation
- Rebuilt game with the latest compiler for more optimisations



N·E·W·S f·l·a·s·h·...

Robin Hood

Robin learns from Stuteley that his nephew, Will Scarlet, is one of the few people who have tried to stand up to the Sheriff. Until now, he has managed to escape the soldiers of Nottingham, but it would appear that he has ended up getting caught. Scarlet is a fairly aggressive young man, but he's loyal to the Locksleys... Robin must set him free!

ZZAP! AMIGA provides a glimpse into a new endeavour by the Apollo Team: a 68K Amiga/Apollo adaptation of the renowned



game, *Robin Hood: Legend of Sherwood*. Initially launched for Windows PCs in 2002 and later reintroduced for Linux in 2012, both of these releases demanded a 1Ghz+ system with a sturdy video card.

The game embraces the pinnacle of 2D graphics; this project epitomises the allure inherent in 'retro games.' Every intricate detail transports players into the heart of medieval England, navigating through

bustling castles and cities with strategic finesse to outmanoeuvre vigilant guards. Notably, the game introduces a captivating ambush system, empowering players to fortify their economy by laying traps and intercepting armed caravans.

Furthermore, *Robin Hood* delivers excellent combat mechanics, as players control Robin's sword movements with the fluidity of mouse-directed actions.

While the existing MAC and PC versions set high benchmarks, mandating a minimum of 512MB memory and a 1000 MHz CPU, the true essence of Amiga thrives in the adept fusion of superior coding on the 68K CPU, coupled with harnessing the DMA capabilities of the Amiga chipset. The port of *Robin Hood* for Amiga exudes



this “Only Amiga makes it possible” spirit anew, showcasing the potential unleashed through 68K AMMX coding and harnessing the prowess of the Super-AGA chipset’s DMA features.

Further information will be made available via <https://apollo-computer.com>



In the tranquil realm of retro gaming, an unexpected turmoil arose when malevolent robots invaded from distant worlds. Their insidious aim: to plunder the precious jewels nested within classic games. To safeguard the treasured

diamonds, coins, stars, and assorted gems of yore, a valiant hero emerges—an endearing robotic figure. This hero, armed with a swift jetpack, races against time to gather these treasures before the clutches of the nefarious invaders. Embark on a cosmic odyssey, traversing planets and galaxies to preserve these invaluable relics.

Continuing the legacy of the C64 hit, *Robot Jet*

Action 2 sets its sights on the Commodore Amiga series, promising an amplified experience. Brace for a vibrant palette, an influx of robotic adversaries, and intensified action!

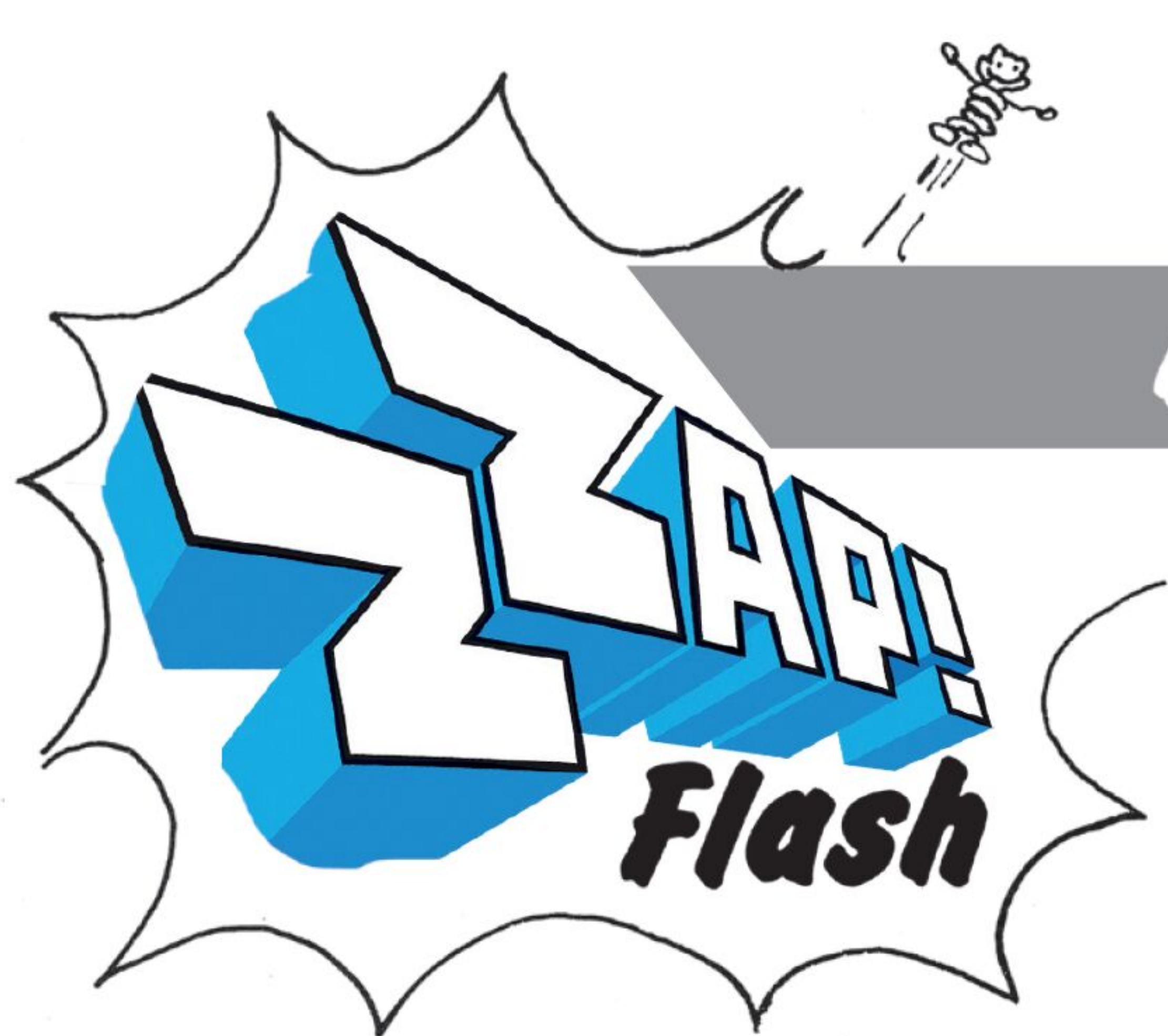
Crafted through Blitz Basic 2 + M68K Assembly, RJA 2 ensures seamless operation on every Amiga iteration, boasting a fluid 50 FPS performance (requiring 512kb+512kb). Revel in over 100 on-screen colours enhanced by stunning copper effects.

Stay tuned for forthcoming announcements, unveiling release plans, dates, and further specifics in early 2024.

Under the skilled guidance of Tomasz ‘Carrion’ Mielnik, this game is in its initial stages of development.

Track the game’s progress at <https://retronavigator.com>.





N·E·W·S f·l·a·s·h...



In 1997, New York City fell victim to an insidious ninja cult known as Union Lizard, devoted to a colossal reptilian demon. Their malevolent grip left the city in shambles, reducing much of it to ruins while enslaving the surviving populace. Amidst this chaos, a lone ninja emerges, determined to thwart Union Lizard's tyranny and liberate the captive citizens.

msmalik681 (Mohammed Malik) undertakes the ambitious task of porting the Sega Megadrive version of *Shadow Dancer*, complemented by music crafted by Italian composer IM76 (Ilario Moretto). Reflecting on the inspiration behind this endeavour, the developer shares, "The Megadrive ver-

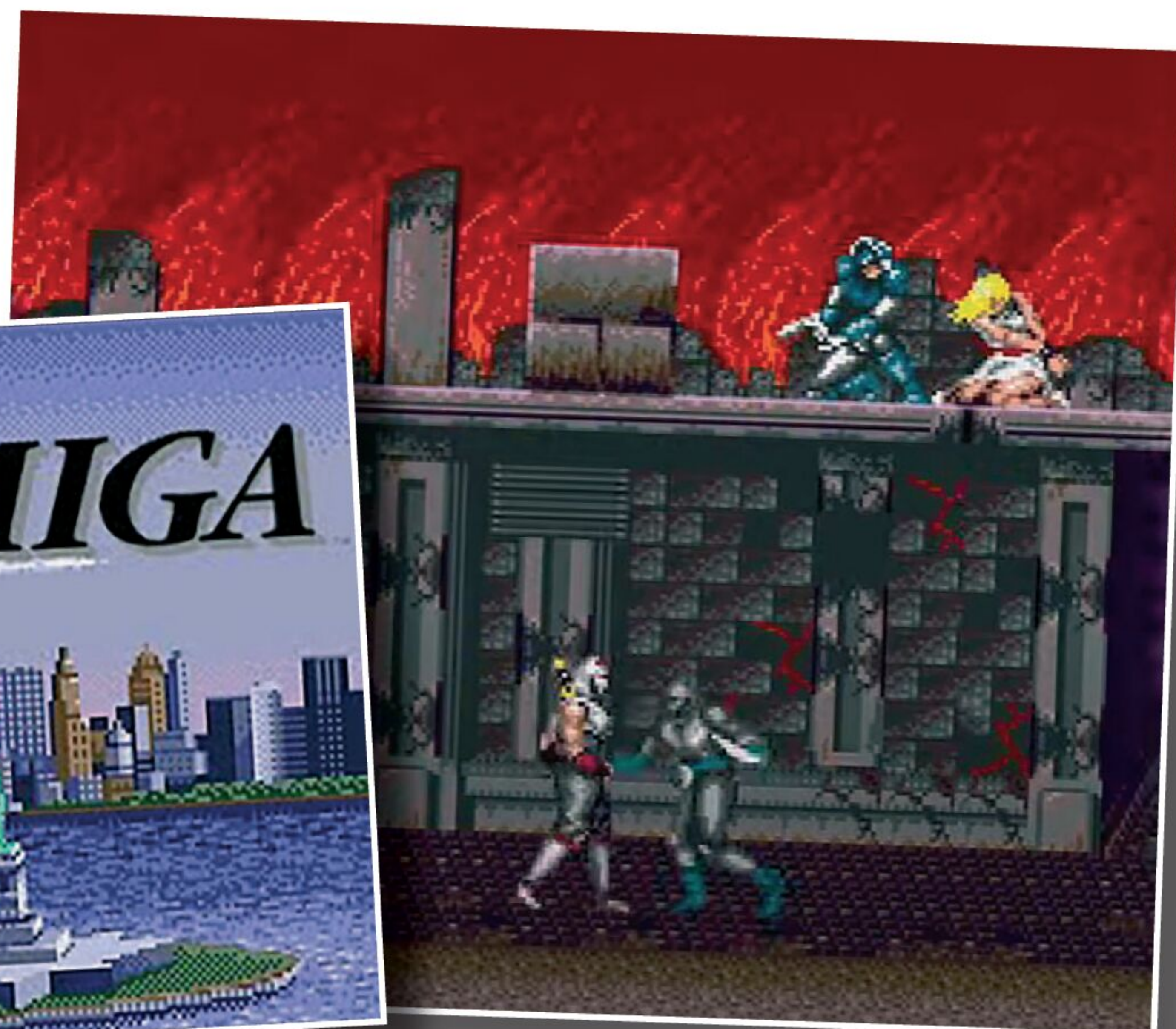


sion reimaged the game brilliantly, surpassing the original arcade iteration. It was a childhood favourite that I immersed myself in endlessly."

Driven by the Scorpion Engine, this port aims to operate on a 1MB OCS Amiga (HDD-version exclusively). However, msalik681 hints at a possi-

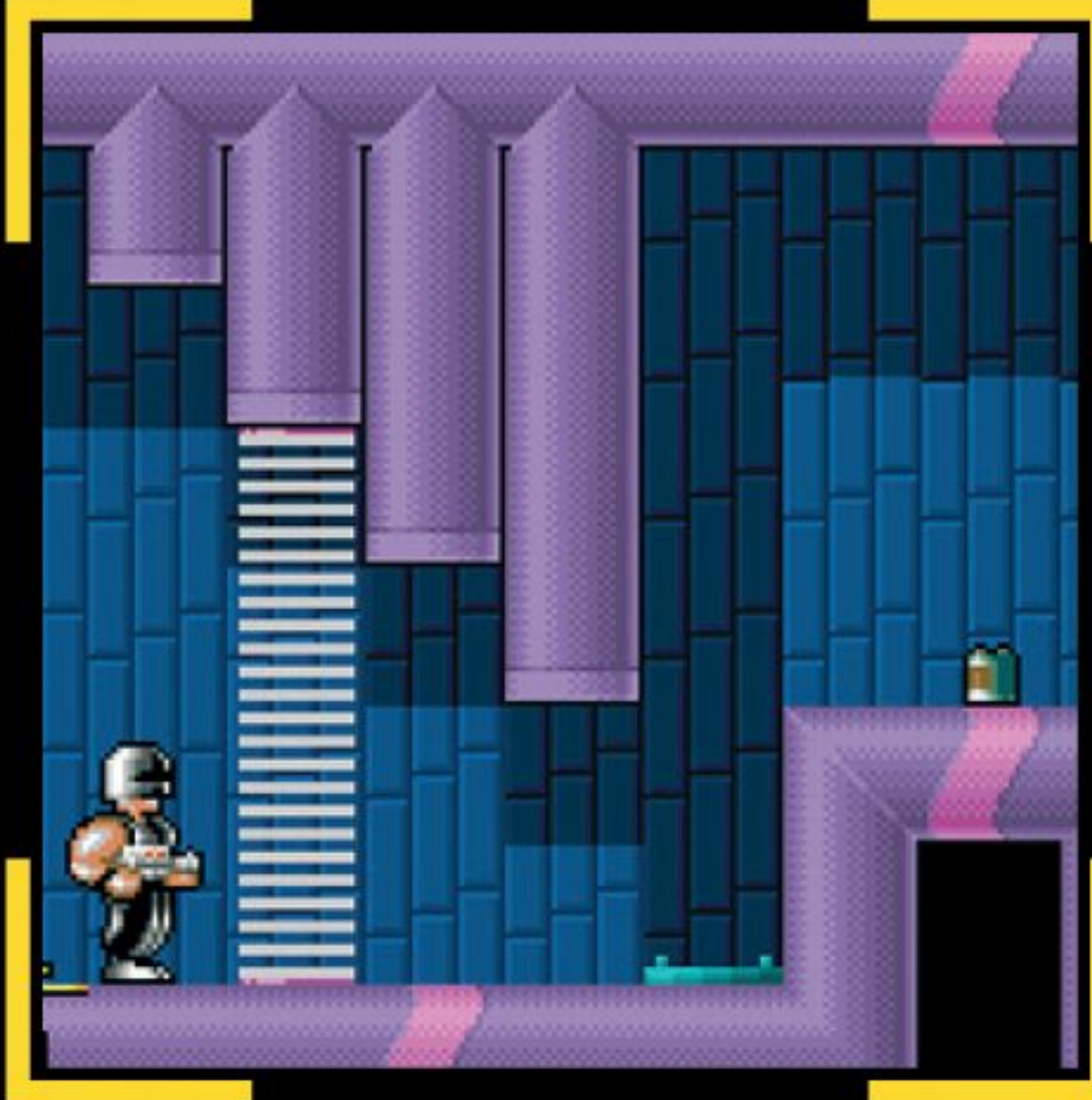
ble expansion to 2MB to accommodate all elements, including Yamato, the loyal canine companion of the ninja warrior.

Stay tuned for forthcoming updates and additional details, accessible at <https://github.com/msalik681>.



Release dates subject to change (estimations sourced from the developers where possible!)

Electroman



Tukinem is porting **Electroman** to the Amiga. Prepare to delve into a futuristic space station, navigating through mental challenges and fast-paced arcade sections across 8 levels.

Scourge of the Underkind

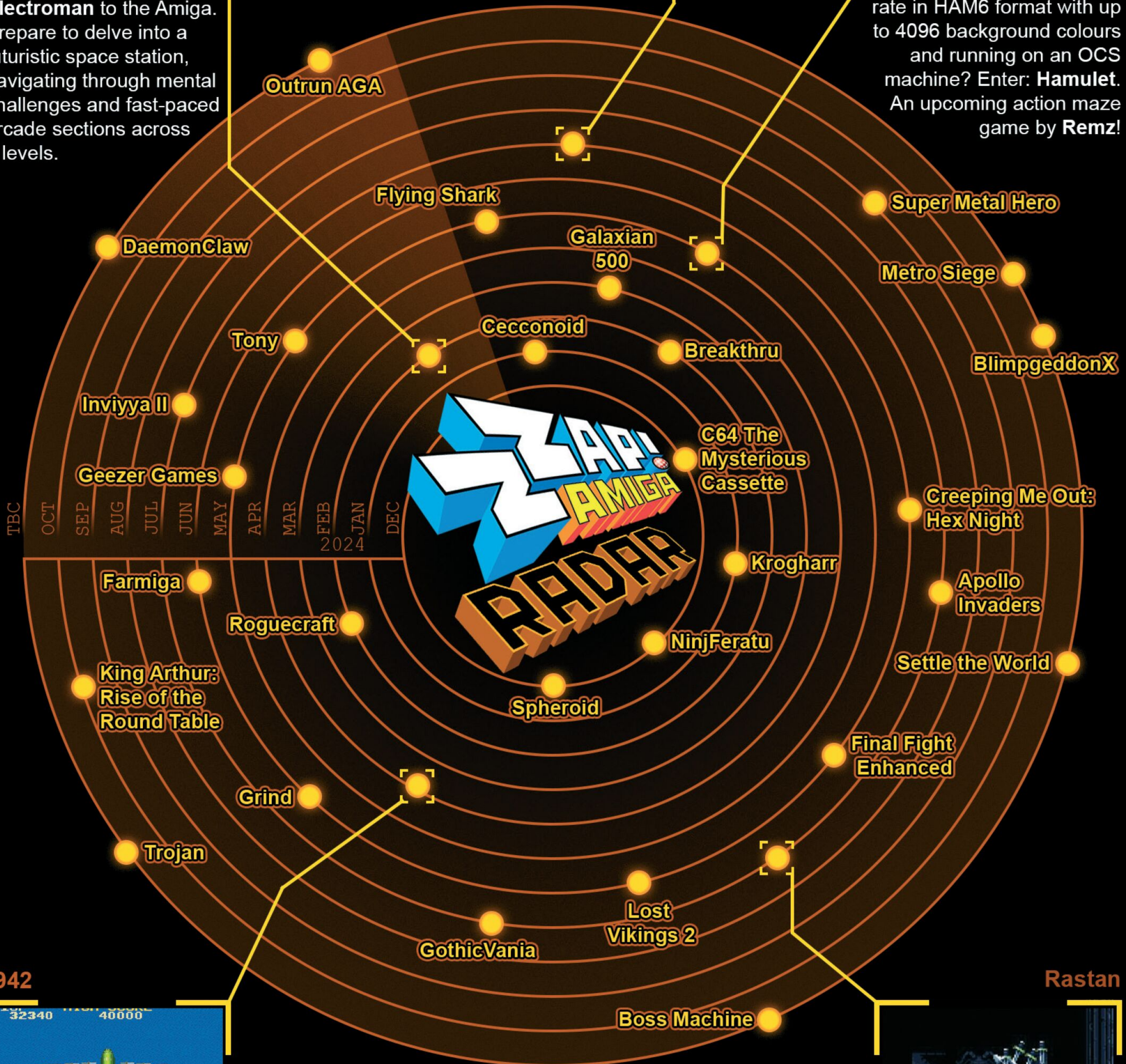


Avenge. You must avenge. This was once a happy place. Now the village is consumed and overrun by abominations. The underkind.

Hamulet



8-ways scrolling at full-frame rate in HAM6 format with up to 4096 background colours and running on an OCS machine? Enter: **Hamulet**. An upcoming action maze game by Remz!



1942



You receive an emergency order of departure, you race to your P-38 Lightning, you have been cleared for taking off, quickly flying away from the aircraft carrier. The classic arcade shooter is finally coming to Amiga!

Play an ex-thief and murderer in an epic left-to-right scrolling journey, slicing, jumping, and climbing through diverse landscapes. Running on a stock Amiga 500 with 512kb extra RAM! **Rastan** - coming soon from **basementApe**.



Specs : A500. Can also be built for Neo Geo.



BAGMAN™

JOTD - 2023 /

Choose to download

There aren't many thieves as long in the tooth as *Bagman*, but is his age reflected in the gameplay? Has the creaking con lost any of his lustre?

Amiga owners can finally find out, thanks to JOTD,

as *Bagman* aims to empty the mines of moneybags all over again. Anyone would think it was 1982!

Unfortunately for Baggers, the number of guards patrolling the mines has not lessened in forty years, although on the plus side, this surely means there's loads of loot still lying around!

Our anti-hero must avoid said guards as he makes his way through the treacherous tunnels and shaky shafts, using the carts and lifts that remain operational after all this time. He can also use any of the discarded pickaxes

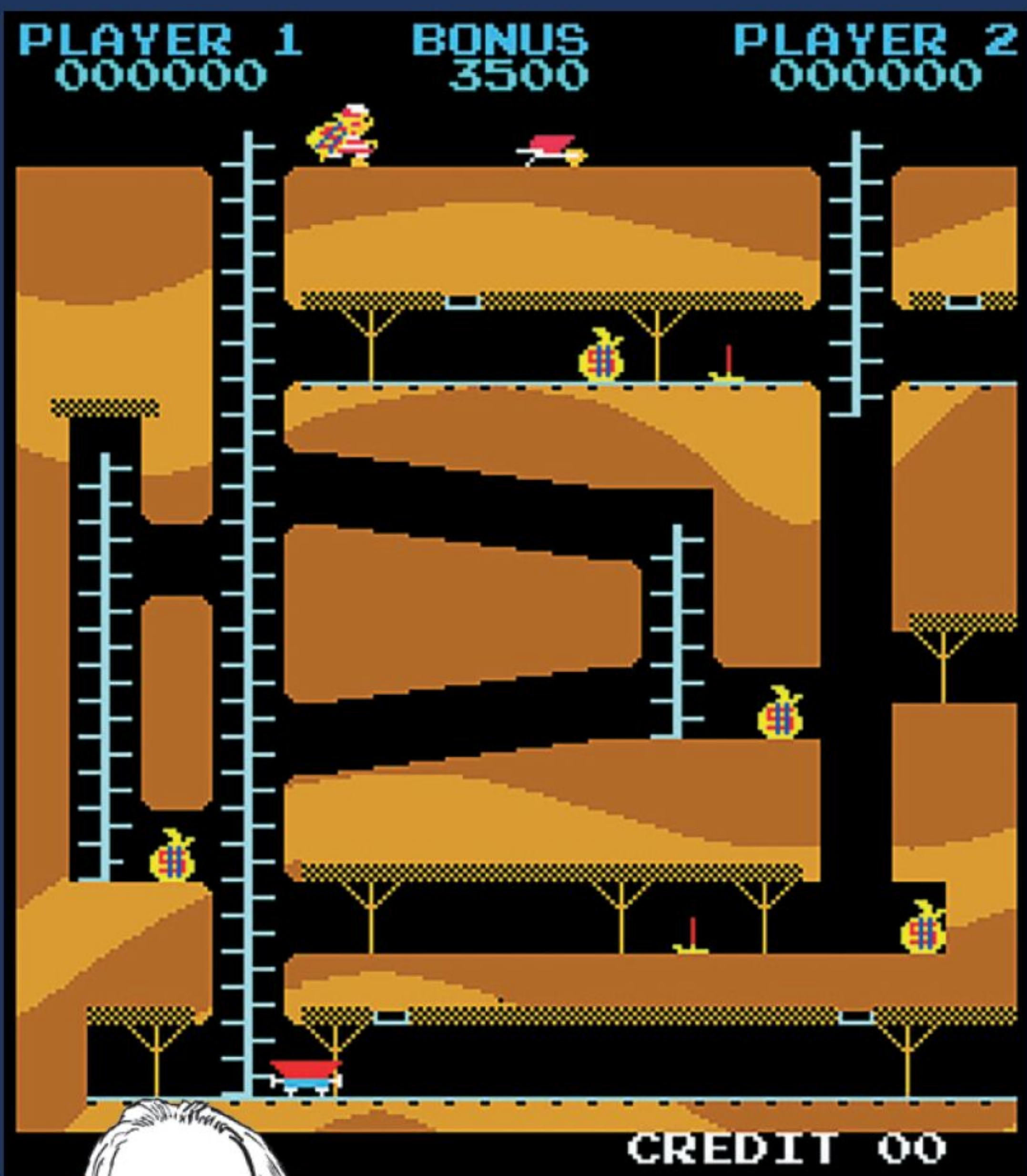
he might find, with which he can hack through walls or knock out any guards who get too close.

Oddly, *Bagman* scores more points for shifting the loot into his wheelbarrow more quickly; you'd think the bags would have set values attached, but bonuses are always welcome.

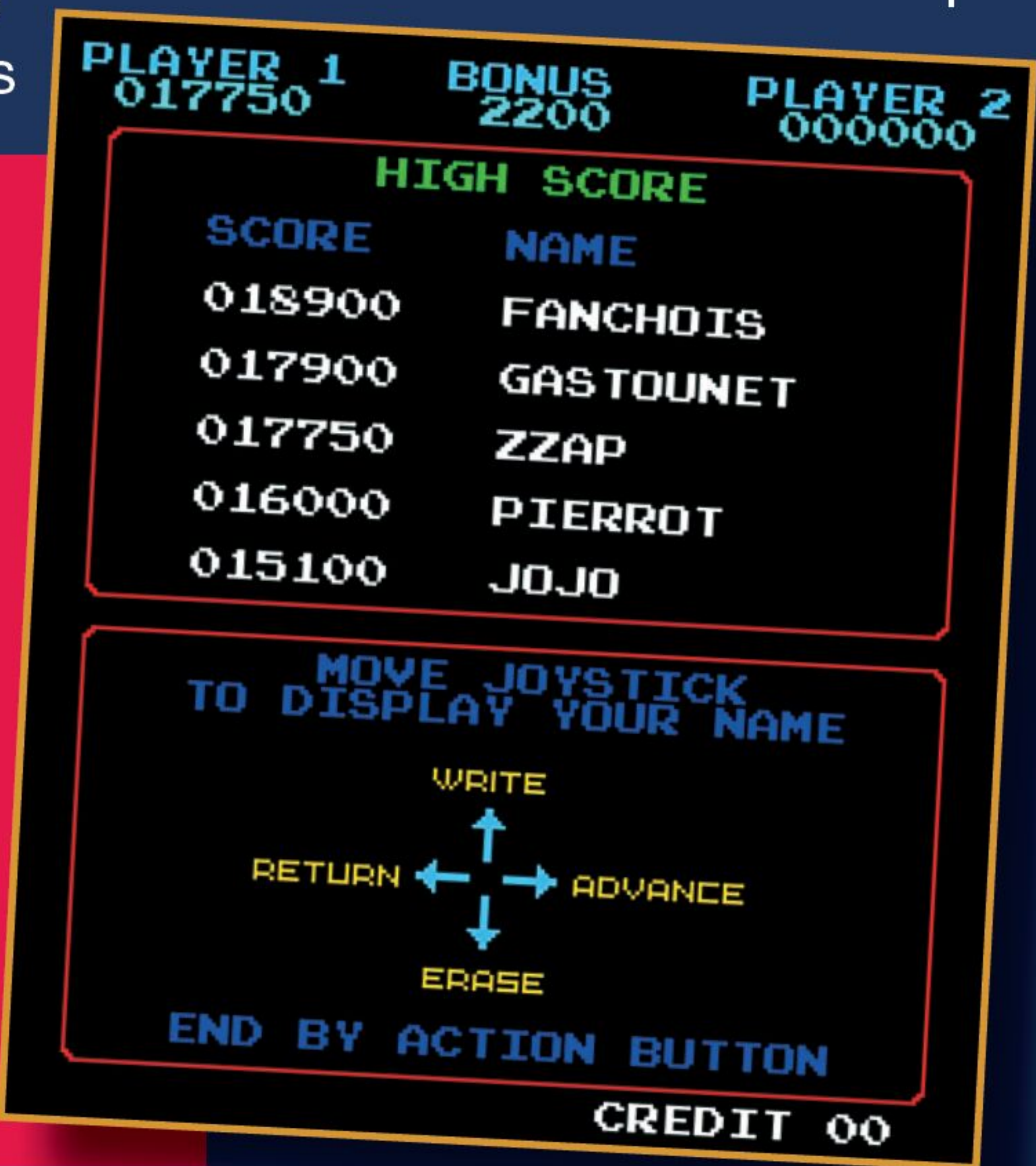
Poor old Baggers, who is clearly getting on a bit now, is not what you'd call nimble as he labours his way around, but he has to make the best of it and get a shift on.

If he's able to remove all the treasure, there's no rest for the wicked as the game starts again from level one.

Oh well... where's the fun in retirement, anyway?



To many in the UK, the obscure French coin-op *Bagman* is better known as *Gilligan's Gold*, Ocean's 8-bit homage. But here we have the original patriotically recreated by the clever jotd. The arcade presentation is spot-on with the attract mode, entering credits, and high-score table. In the game, we have the classic mining action, with pickaxes and minecarts, as you rush around filling your wheelbarrow with bags of gold. It retains the exacting difficulty and tight bonus countdowns, making the quest for points especially tough. Long-term, there is very little that changes and so reducing the desire to come back. But for quick sessions of play, there is plenty of gold-grabbing fun to be had.

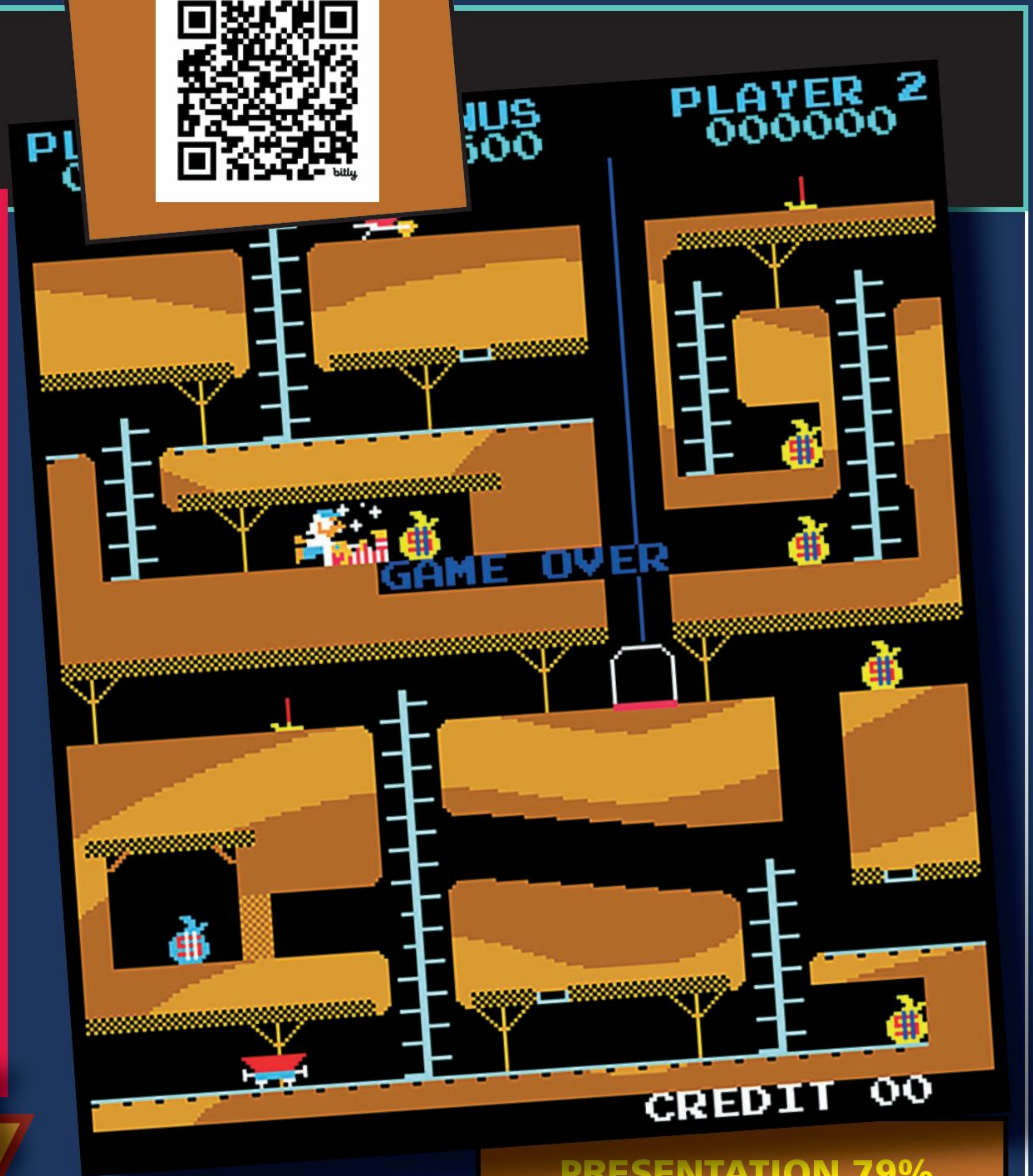




I thought I was done with Bagman after two outings for ZZAP! 64, but no, here he is again. At first, you might think he's called Bagman because he needs to wear a bag over his head, being as ugly as he is. That's just the nature and age of the game at play, though. Decrepitude aside, it's a very serviceable conversion of the ancient arcade game, and importantly, it's fun to play. The fact it takes place across multiple screens makes it more interesting than most games of its time, and you need to strategise a bit if you're going to get anywhere. An excellent representation of a fun and challenging game.



Get the game here



Arcade History

Bagman was released in arcades by French game developers Valadon Automation in 1982. In France, the game was known as Le Bagnard (The Convict). Bagman was licensed to Stern for U.S. distribution in 1983, and to Taito in Japan the same year.

JOTD originally started a rough port of this game back in 2010, translated from a Windows SDL version. Over the years he has returned to the project and refined it with this version, using real game code translated to 68000.



PRESENTATION 79%

Looks like the arcade game, and with a handy cheat menu for those that need them.

GRAPHICS 51%

It's not the most sophisticated arcade game out there, but the Amiga recreates it faithfully with diminutive sprites and bright colours.

SOUND 61%

A very repetitive main tune and good jingles, accompanied by some crunchy speech and FX.

HOOKABILITY 79%

Les gendarmes will have the upper hand at first.

LASTABILITY 80%

This old-school challenge may prove addictive. All that glitters is not gold.

OVERALL 80%

Tres bien but very difficult, another arcade relic arrives sur l'Amiga. Get this one in the bag, man.





Sounds Like Paula

The AMIGA Works

Allister Brimble



Allister Brimble is best known for his Team 17 soundtracks, composing for some of the company's biggest Amiga hits. Andrew Fisher lends an ear to *The Amiga Works*, the compilation of Allister's perfect Paula compositions.

Back in 2014, Allister set about creating a double album of some of his greatest Amiga compositions, reworked by Allister himself, with additional arrangements by fellow composer Chris Hülsbeck. Several tracks featured the synthesizers Allister had sampled to create the original tunes. The result was funded through Kickstarter to create a 2-CD set. One reward level included a special USB drive containing the full album and bonus material – more of Allister's 1990s albums, artwork, wallpaper, and ringtones. This small USB drive rotated to reveal the

connector and could attach to a keyring, letting you take your Brimble bonus material with you.

So, what have we got to listen to? From the 1990s rave of *Body Blows Galactic* to the twee mediaeval sound of *Troddlers*, disc 1 has plenty of variety. There are some guitar-heavy moments, and the playlist starts and ends with the dark presence of *Alien Breed*. The orchestral arrangement of *Spellbound Dizzy* is great fun too, and it ends with a familiar sample telling you to insert Disc 2. Here, we find plenty of very bouncy and froggy themes from the classic *Superfrog*, more gritty and dramatic *Alien Breed* tracks, and the lesser-known (but epic) *Subwar 2050* theme.

Allister would go on to create three more albums in the "Works" series, in collaboration with Kickstarter projects. "The Spectrum Works" accompanied the Bitmap Books' ZX Spectrum Compendium in 2015, reworking classic Spectrum tunes from several composers. "The Galway Works" in 2016 concentrated on Martin Galway's classic C64



themes for a Fusion Retro Books Kickstarter, with remixes from Jeroen Tel, Chris Hülsbeck, and Mike Clarke also featured. Finally, "David Whittaker Amiga Works" accompanied *The Story of the Commodore Amiga in Pixels* from Fusion Retro Books in 2017. Here, Allister remixed the themes from David's Amiga career, including *Shadow of the Beast*, *Speedball*, and *Xenon*.

These updated and remixed Amiga classics are perfect for listening to when you are on your Amiga, or just relaxing with them on in the background while you think about Amiga.

That one time at Bandcamp

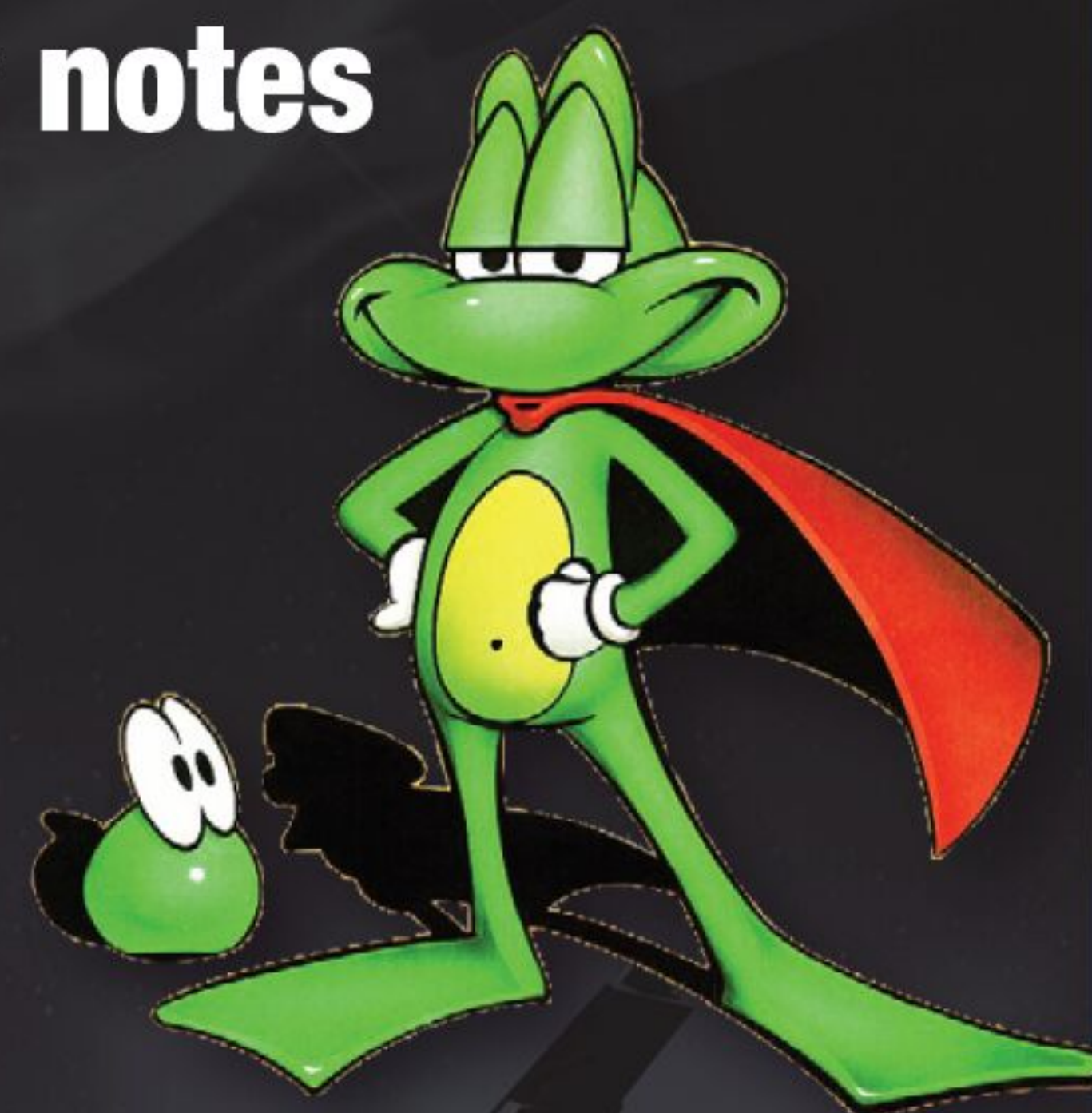
The full album is still available from <https://allisterbrimble.bandcamp.com/> along with other albums. This includes his remasters of the *Driver* and *Driver 2* soundtracks, and the three other “Works” albums.



The full track listing of The Amiga Works, with liner notes from the original CD.

Disc 1:

1. Alien Breed Prelude (1:55) *A new track based on the original Breed theme featuring dynamic enhancing filtering.*
2. Assassin (5:22)
3. Assassin Hi-score (2:27)
4. Zeewolf (4:21)
5. Overdrive (3:55) *Featuring live guitar played by Clive Burnage*
6. Project X (5:23)
7. Project X Old Timer (7:38) *aka Thesmophoria, arranged by Chris Hülsbeck*
8. Sexy Robot (5:23) *From Amiga Format's October 1989 cover disk*
9. Troddlers Title (2:21)
10. Body Blows Galactic (4:46)
11. Full Contact Title (5:29)
12. Full Contact Menu (2:53) *Original by Jimmy Fredriksson*
13. Spellbound Dizzy (5:00) *Full orchestral arrangement with permission from Codemasters Software Ltd.*
14. Alien Breed (6:58)



Disc 2:

1. Superfrog Title (2:18)
2. Superfrog Woodland (3:58)
3. Superfrog Spooky (3:37)
4. Superfrog Funpark (3:22)
5. Superfrog Ancient (2:25)
6. Superfrog Iceworld (4:10)
7. Superfrog Space (4:15)
8. Dojo Dan (5:22) *Features the original FM synths from a Yamaha TG77*
9. Alien Breed II (4:33) *Featuring the original synths used from the Korg O1 & Yamaha TG77*
10. Subwar 2050 (4:15)
11. Alien Breed Tower Assault (3:25)
12. The Amiga Never Dies (4:15) *Superfrog's promo demo tune. Updated for Amiga Works!*
13. Alien Breed Finale (4:58)

AMIGA PARTY CULTURE

By Judge Drokk

No one lives forever, but it's what we do while we're here that matters. If we get the opportunity to record the memories of those events, great. Even better if we can present those memories in a format that will be enjoyed by others and saved for future generations. Welcome to Amiga Party Culture, a series that, over the last two years, has explored one of the most important component parts of the Amiga demoscene - the party. Sadly, we now reach the final chapter and, over a two-part-special, we celebrate a unique attribute of a movement that will soon reach its fourth decade, by sharing the best memories of those who were there. Happenings and experiences that have left their mark in time. As a party organiser myself, I, Judge Drokk, begin with my own first experience at an Amiga party, which is possibly the first real Amiga party held in the UK. I recently caught up with the guy whose actual home was the location of this 48-hour mega event. Please welcome Andrew Chapman, aka ANZ of Magnetic Fields, the host of the 'Select Party' on the 3rd and 4th of February 1990.

JD - How did you go from getting an Amiga to hosting a legendary party?

ANZ - It started when I discovered the existence of the scene at a local computer club in Doncaster, UK. I had a trusty C64 and 1541 drive with a burst nibbler cable and a Trilogic cart. I met a guy called Blaster, who was a member of an Amiga group called *Magnetic Fields* (MF). We got chatting, and it turned out he also had a C64 with an Oceanic drive. He was then my go-to guy for my 5 1/4 floppy warez.

I had been dabbling with Tony Crowther's

Outside the Magnetic Fields 'Select' Party.



sprite editor and had been bitten by the bug of creating computer graphics and animations.

I had had my eye on an Amiga for a while at this point too, and was close to having enough cash to upgrade. Luckily, one came up for sale in the Exchange and Mart paper, but it was in Enfield, London - quite a trek from Doncaster. The Amiga was advertised as still boxed, used only a few times, with several games and a joystick - all for 200 quid! I made the phone call.

I arrived in Enfield the next day, after a series of confusing train changes, to find the Amiga was pristine. I paid, gave my thanks, and hurried home via British Rail's finest.

I had been messing with *Deluxe Paint III* for a few weeks and had designed a character called Mr Lucky, who was basically a rip-off of the Rainbow Islands guy, Bub, resplendent in dungarees. Anyway, I did an animation of him getting

Food and floppy disks.



crushed by a marble MF logo. When I met up with Blaster at the club the next time, he had No5 with him. I showed him the animation and he suggested I join MF as a graphics artist.

It was cold that winter, really cold. Even the robins were wearing icicles. My mum, however, was on

a voyage to see her father, whom she hadn't seen since she was thirteen, in the heat of Lightning Ridge, Australia. She had granted permission for me to have a 'computer party' at the house whilst

she was away - as long as everything was in order when she returned.

I hastily gave word to No5 and Cosy that we had the green light for our Select Party gathering. They had set it as a precursor to our bigger party later in the year. The pair were amazing leaders and had a great flair for organising events and getting group members organised with demos and ideas. We had some really talented guys, and No5 and Cosy nurtured that.

Anyway, the date was set, and they got the info out there and sold tickets. I was left to organise food and drink. Drink courtesy of my friend at the corner shop, by sale or return,



and food on the end of the phone, courtesy of my favourite pizza takeaway, Pizza Milano - now long gone, unfortunately.

JD - Did you have help setting up?

ANZ - No5 and some other members of the group arrived on Friday night before the party to help clear out the living room and create a bare canvas. We humped all the furniture upstairs and piled it on the top landing, leaving access only to the bathroom for the toilet, then went and picked up the vocal lubricant from the corner shop, bumped it inside, and stocked the bar.

We planned to have as many machines as we

could hooked up around the edges of the room. I set up my machine in a prime spot in anticipation of getting a bit of practice in on *Kick Off*, ready for a planned tournament. I had recently purchased a *Speedking* joystick and was still getting to grips with it.

Late into the night, around midnight, someone reported seeing a shadowy figure sat against a tree outside. So, No5 and I went out to find Paranoid of Illusion (if I remember correctly) sat outside, half frozen. We quickly got him inside and warmed up a bit. After beer and a game of *Kick Off*, I left the crew to it and got my head down. I woke some hours later and, still slumberous, apparently proclaimed to

everyone. "I told you it wasn't a full demo!"

Morning approached quickly, and people started turning up. First Yaz/Dextrous and Frap, and then some members of Acme, Illusion, and Oracle. The room was starting to buzz with

conversation, with people hooking up their equipment and some confusion at the party location.

The day progressed in good spirits, with ideas flowing, demos being coded, and pizza being demolished. A huge stack of warez was circulating - one of those games is a forever etched earworm - *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, by Don Bluth. That bloody tune, 'You can't put a good dog down', was echoing around the room all day, but what a pile of shite the game was!

Anarchy, Inner City, Paradox, and some other groups joined the fray as the day went on, the room now becoming crammed with maybe 60-70 people. Luckily, we had some overflow into the kitchen, and the open staircase managing to seat maybe a dozen people helped. The *Kick Off* competition was a great success, though I got knocked out in the quarters or semis, a feat I was to repeat later that year at the Revenge Party. Did Opal win?

JD - I remember more than AMIGA on the TVs?

ANZ - Yeah, I managed to rig up my portable Matsui VHS/TV combo in a corner display cabinet, the open staircase providing an excellent vantage point.



Demo competition time.

We were running some Traci Lords early in the day and later the shocker horror movie, *Bad Taste*, which was just out on the underground circuit. There is a scene in that movie which is particularly gruesome, and upon seeing this, one guy at the top of the open staircase faints and falls arse-over-tit down the stairs over everyone. Luckily, he was perfectly fine!

JD - Ouch! Any other near disasters?

ANZ - I seem to remember someone branding their hand and getting electrocuted. They had reached under a table and unplugged a cable from a 4-gang adapter box, not realising that the white plastic plate had detached with the plug, leaving the copper contacts in the socket exposed. When he went feeling with his hand, moments later, he grabbed the adapter - literally! He was also, luckily, fine, apart from his hand being branded.

The evening came and became a little quieter, and people thinned out a little. Some people trying to sleep, others drinking and ordering food. Groups finalizing and implementing stuff for the Demo competition the



next day. No5 and a few of the other group members went off to get some sleep, as did I.

JD - Day two - demo competitions!

ANZ - Oh yes! Sunday came and was a hive of activity again from the off. The demo competition was at 2pm, and some groups were still having issues. No5 showed up refreshed after some kip and a roast dinner, tension mounting as the deadline for finished demos approached. Anarchy took top honours with their excellent Party Demo by Kreator & 4MAT.

All in all, it was an

amazing weekend for me. Just a friendly, like-minded gathering and vibe. Being a member of Magnetic Fields, I formed lifelong friendships for which I will be eternally grateful.

JD - People might not realize you have another claim to fame, or maybe two?

ANZ - Yeah, at the time I was creating cover disks for CU Amiga, also an intro graphic for Birds of Prey by Electronic Arts. Early-mid 90s, I worked in graphics for in-flight entertainment systems and military training courseware using Amiga and other Commodore hardware.



AMIGA

Art

Simon ^{by} Butler

Tis the season to be jolly and, when there are magnificent pixels to peruse, then who could be otherwise?

Even an old Grinch like myself feels his blackened

heart glow with festive cheer when gazing in awe at the skills on display in this month's gallery.

So grab your chestnuts, polish your baubles, and let's take a stroll...

1: Stromtrooper : Facet 2023

I make no bones about not being the greatest fan of the whole Star Wars mythos but golly jeeppers, Facet sure as hell crafted one bad-ass Stormtrooper here.

I'm going out on a limb and guessing that he's created this gem with 32 colours, which only makes him even more annoying than ever because he seems to weave his magic with frightening regularity and wonderfully limited palettes.

It's a simple but stark pose, but simplicity is what makes this stand out. That, and the swirling, coruscating lines of energy that may or may not be related to the force.

Whatever the thoughts behind the construction of this image, it is irrefutable that, once again, Facet knocks these pixels out of the park with sheer genius!



2: The Mask : Gordian Neumann 2023

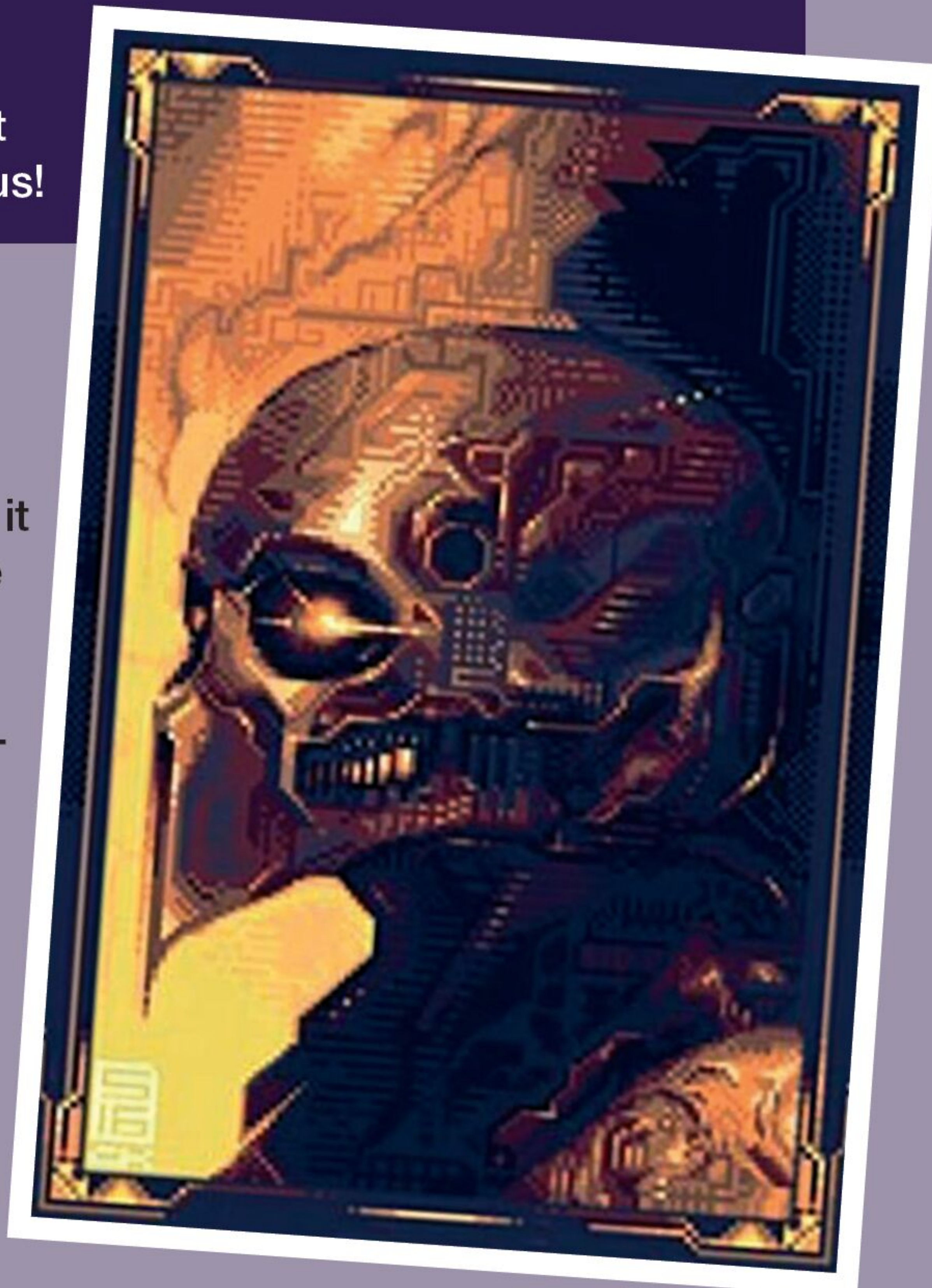
There's a terrible and brutal beauty to this piece.

While the image itself is not elegant, or graceful, it is composed of such elements throughout to create a whole that is powerful and truly imposing.

Careful inspection finds a wealth of tiny details everywhere you look. Filigree lines that could be circuitry in the pauldron on the shoulder and throughout the savage helm itself.

The sombre tones in the palette are menacing yet regal, suggesting strength with a sense of threat.

There is no humanity here, only a cruel presence crafted with skill and aplomb.



3. The Boinged Eagle Attacks the Falcon : stefftest 2023

It's not hard to instantly see the "logic" behind this image, but I shall dance swiftly around the schoolyard "my Dad's bigger than your Dad"-style arguments that reverberate to this day in the Retro scene and simply point out the quality of the craftsmanship on display.

By outlining the major elements within this piece, each stands out superbly, giving the finished article a clarity and "bite".

The eagle, with its plumage superbly crafted in tones that some may find more than a tad contentious, swoops from the left and collides with a familiar logo wrought from crystal, causing chaos in doing so.

The message, such as it is, is exceptionally clear, and without taking sides I can only say that this is a great piece of work regardless of one's allegiance.



4: Amiga Lagoon : Jim Sachs 1993

I decided to leap back thirty years to a piece by a man without whom this gallery would almost certainly not exist.

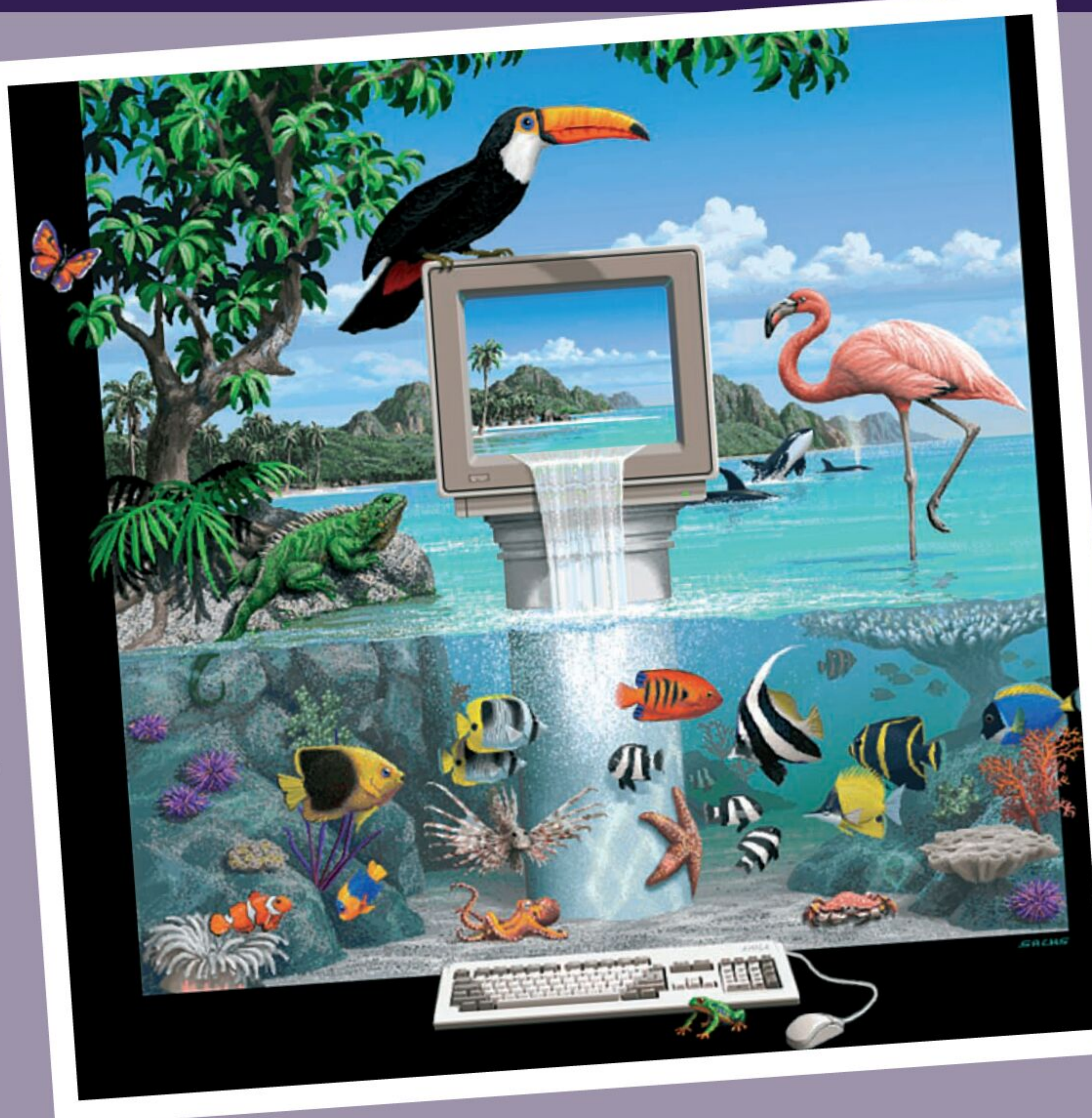
It's not the greatest example of composition, but it probably blew the little minds of a generation of school kids who are now some of the finest exponents of Amiga craftsmanship.

I'm not being overly critical saying the composition is somewhat staid, because it is. This simply shows what the Amiga was capable of at a time when those lucky enough to get their talented hands on it were merely scratching the surface of its abilities.

Jim Sachs created a host of images that are seared into the very DNA of gaming history, from Ports of Call to the groundbreaking Defender of the Crown.

It is not untrue to say that he laid the groundwork for decades of Amiga artists with delicate, well-crafted pieces like the example here.

There is no message, no hidden meaning - simply as fine a piece of old-school 16-bit work as you could wish for from an artist of the highest stripe.





SACK Review

Defender of the Crown

Master Design Software/Cinemaware - 1986

In this feature, we take a look back at a classic AMIGA game that has never previously been put through the ZZAP! TEST. The team provide a fresh review of **Defender of the Crown**.

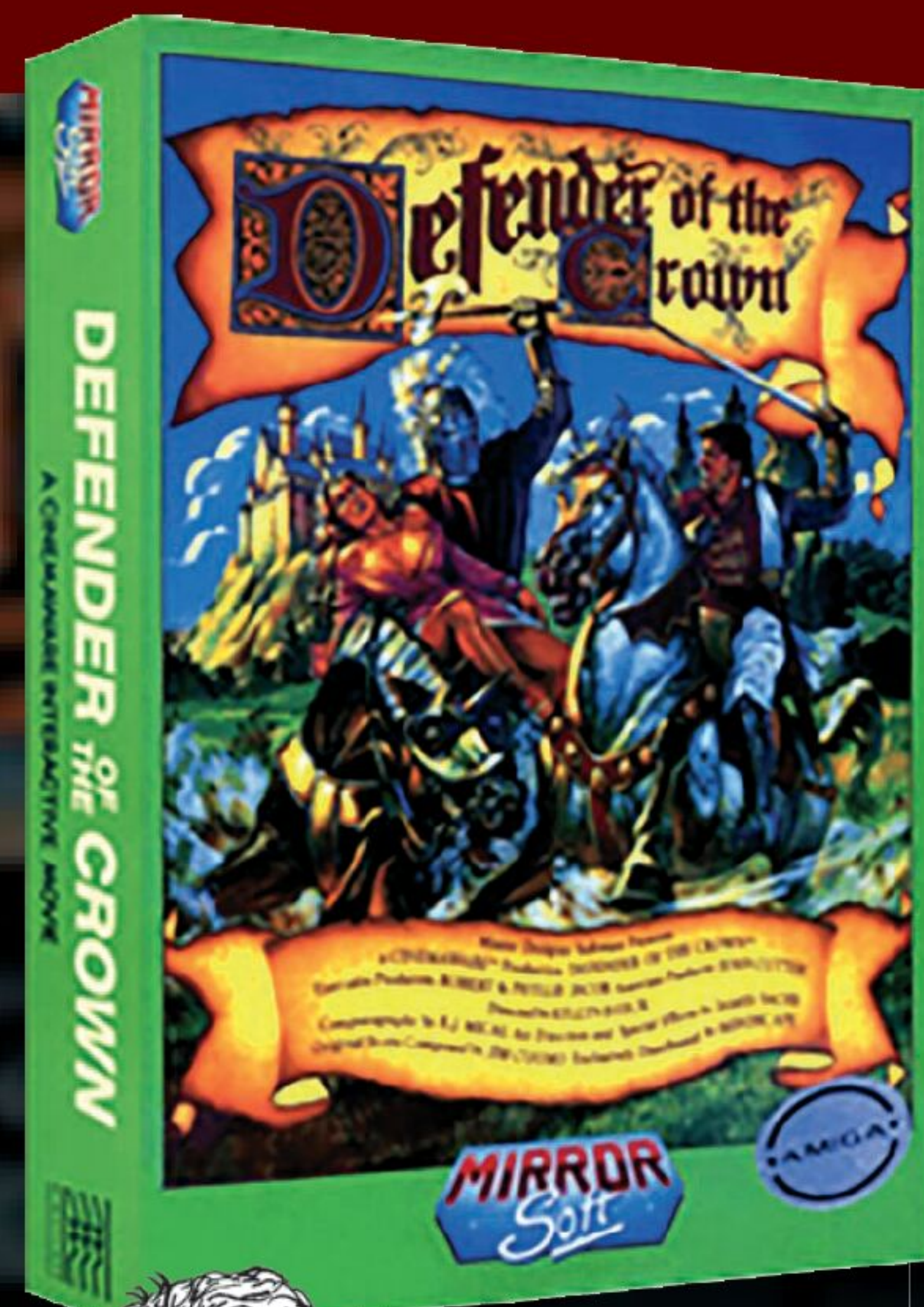
Talk of Medieval England brings thoughts of a market full of dirty faces, going to the toilet out of your bedroom window, and receiving a painful death for walking on the wrong side of the road. As a male in this era, learning how to handle a sword is mandatory to stay alive, and as a female, you had best find yourself a wealthy warrior to marry, ASAP!

Defender of the Crown puts you in the role of a Saxon knight when the whole of England and Wales is in turmoil, with

regions changing hands between Normans and Saxons in the blink of an eye. Ed: *Scotland, as always, was out of bounds!*

Initially provided with a small army and a castle, your objective is to become overall ruler and live a peaceful life with the maiden of your choice.

To raise money for war and building your army, you can choose to lay siege to and loot other castles. With the gold you acquire, you can amass soldiers, knights, and catapults in your quest for victory.



I have to admit, the first time my jaw dropped to this game was seeing it on my friend's Atari ST. I had

a C64 at the time, and I had never seen anything like it. The images are etched in the memory. Bombarding the castle wall with boulders, torches flickering on the castle walls as you swordfight up the steps, and, of course, the silhouette of you embracing the dusky maiden you have rescued. The AMIGA version was even better, with improved sound and a few little added extras. Ultimately, it was the catalyst to me upgrading my beloved 8-bit machine, and I remember showing it off to my parents, who remained perplexingly unimpressed! For a while I thought gaming couldn't get any better, until Cinemaware's next release, that was.





There are also periodic jousting competitions where territories can be won as prizes.

Strategy is the key - knowing when to go into battle, and when to raid. Sometimes, by laying

quiet, a territory becomes completely free, and no battle is required to take it.

Good luck, Sir ZZAPalot!. May you find your beautiful damsel and bring the country together under your rule.



Defender of the Crown is quite simply the game that set Cinemaware apart from

every other publisher at the time. A truly epic story that felt more like an interactive movie than a game, and rightly became a smash hit on release. It was one of the first titles to combine strategy, roleplay, and arcade action; expanding your kingdom over multiple regions to unite the kingdom all under one rule. All while keeping your eye on the day-to-day trivial affairs to avoid you being usurped from the throne. From the jousting tournaments to simply traipsing through the cast, everything on display captures the essence of Hollywood that inspired it, alongside the beautiful music and effects which elevate the visuals further.

PRESENTATION 93%

Well-organised menu system, and the overall package is slick and polished.

GRAPHICS 90%

Beautifully stunning art teleports you to the world in an instant.

SOUND 85%

Atmospheric music and sound FX bring the visuals further to life.

HOOKABILITY 83%

Like all strategy games, it takes a while to get into, but persevere, it will all make sense.

LASTABILITY 88%

There is enough to keep you challenging for an era or two.

OVERALL 88%

Make haste in your diary good sir, one fears thou may lose a weekend or two with thine adventure.

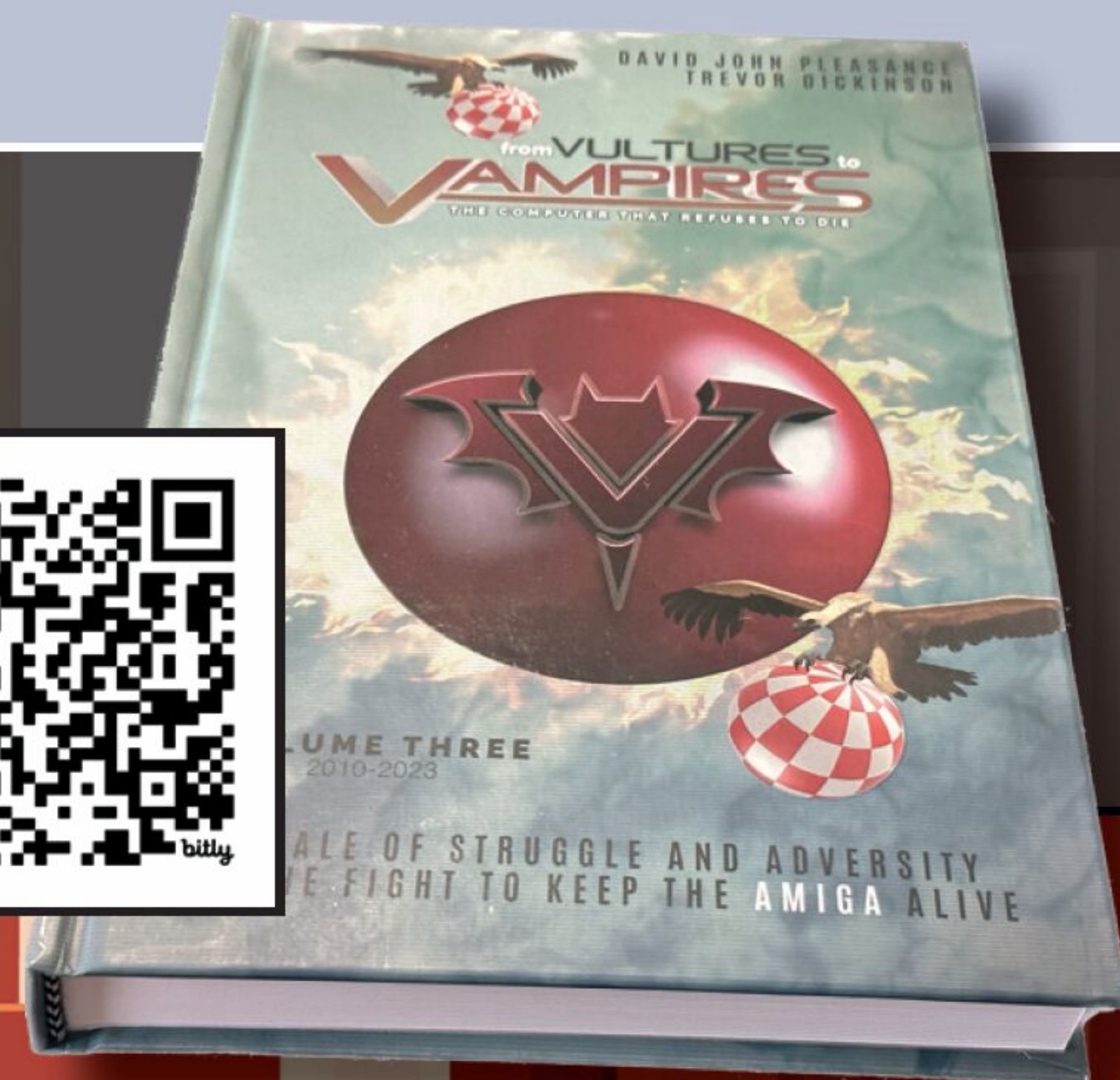
AMIGA Bookshelf

Andrew Fisher puts another book onto his Amiga bookshelf, looking at the third volume of a series we first covered in issue 8.

From Vultures To Vampires Volume 3 – 2010-2023

Authors: David J Pleasance & Trevor Dickinson

RRP: € 40 £35 / \$45 (Hardback)



David and Trevor released this third volume with distribution help from German publishers Look Behind You (who also make the Amiga Duel card game). After an excellent foreword from Dave Haynie, there are seven main chapters.

Chapter 1 - 'Powering on' continues the story of 2010, as both AmigaOS and MorphOS continue to develop and Trevor's X1000 project is hit by supply and motherboard

issues. A very funny story about a cake is included.

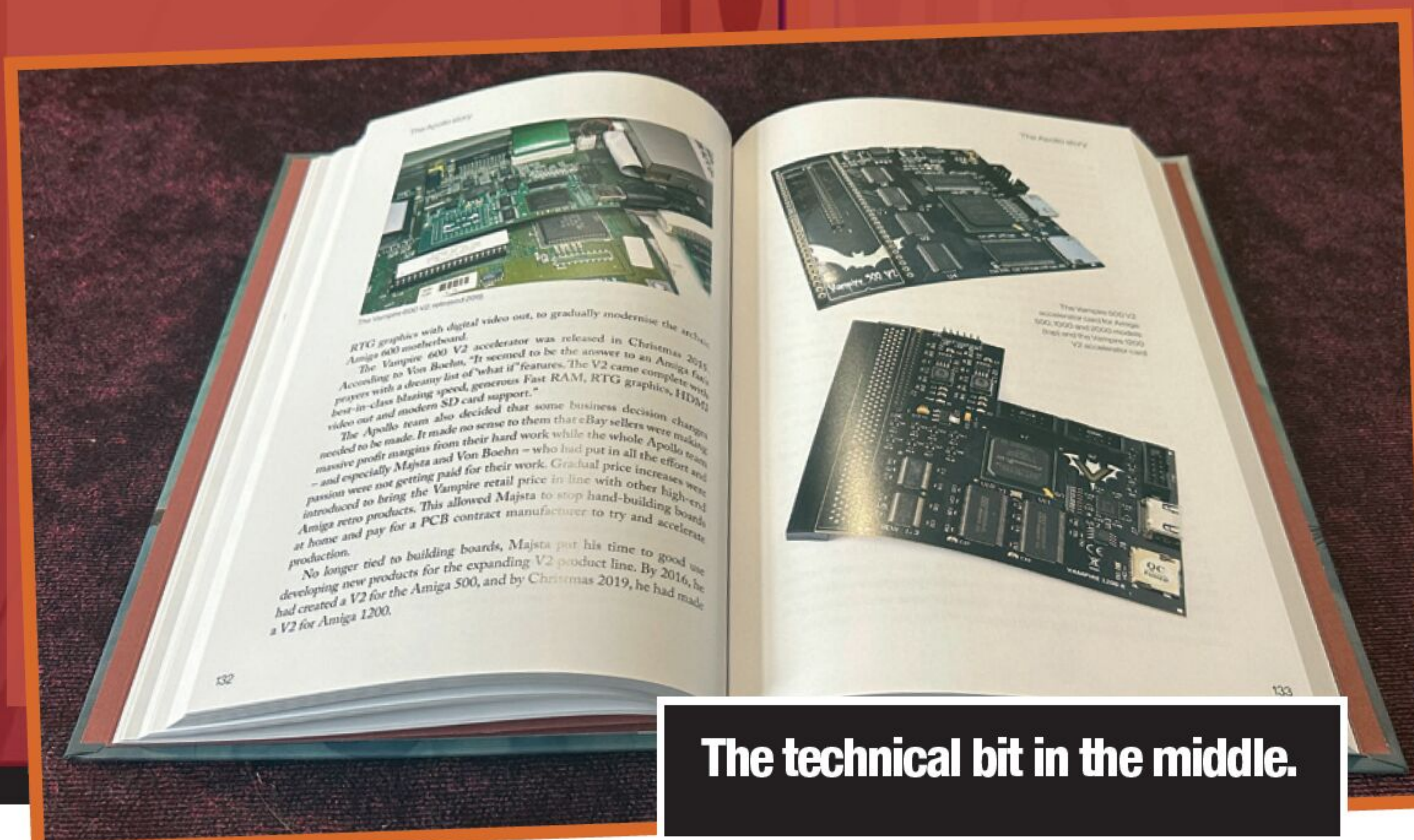
Chapter 2 - 'Liquid silicon and retro clones' starts with a description of the FPGA (Floating Point Gate Array) chips that have allowed "cores" of classic computers to be developed. This chapter is particularly interesting for its revelations about the C64DTV from an insider, and the work of Jeri Ellsworth and Individual Computers. It also introduces the Vampire

accelerator project, which helped give the book series its name.

Chapter 3 - 'The Apollo story' describes the new initiative and how it helped spur more development, including the stand-alone Vampire and other motherboards.

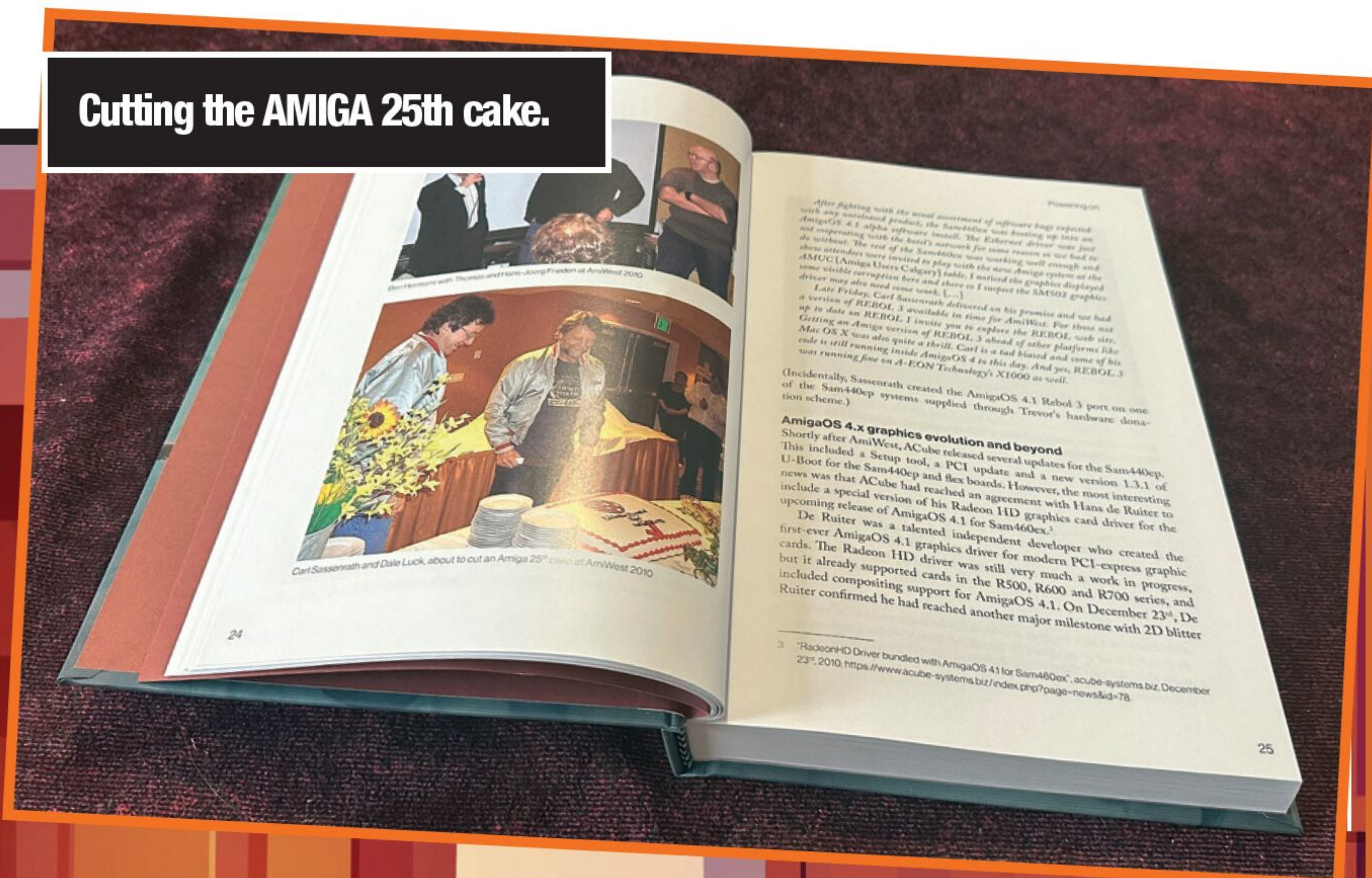
Chapter 4 - 'Technology triumphs: The makers and shakers' looks at replacement cases, new ITX forms, the Armiga, the continued development of software emulation, and more.

Chapter 5 - 'The never-ending story' focuses on the trademarks, the companies trying to use them, and the further development of AmigaOS and MorphOS - as well as the successor to the X1000, the Cyrus+.



The technical bit in the middle.

Cutting the AMIGA 25th cake.



Andrew's bookshelf!



Chapter 6 - 'Detente' picks up the story in 2015, as meetings seem to solve the ongoing legal battle - only for it to start up again. Software updates and the Enhancer Software bundle are also mentioned.

Chapter 7 - 'Renaissance' goes back to Amiga's 30th birthday and the events it created, described by David himself as a renaissance for interest in the computer and its modern forms.

There are a couple of negatives to get out of the way first. One is the continued use of long footnotes, where website addresses for key information are not shortened or put in an easier-to-read form. Some need to be accessed through the Wayback Machine. And while there is less emphasis on technical specifications, there are some long lists as new

hardware is introduced.

As with the other two volumes, there are plenty of photos and illustrations to round out the visual side of the book, and the text itself flows well - even though it is not fully chronological in order this time. The continued enthusiasm for the Amiga does shine through, along with the dedicated people who are trying to keep it alive. David and Trevor should be complimented

on completing the trilogy and bringing the story up to date. With David's first book (Commodore: The Inside Story), completing the set is expensive, but worthwhile for a true Amiga fan.



The Vultures to Vampires trilogy.



Pleiades 3D

Mikko Ketonen — 2023 / £4.99 to download

Get the game here



The constellation of Pleiades is also called the Seven Sisters, and this game tells the story of seven spacefaring sisters.

Each sister controls a space station, but Alcyone

Station has lost the Ray-Stones that power its engines – trapping it and its operator Alice in place. As a brave pilot, you must take Alice on an expedition to retrieve the five stones. You

will need Credits to equip your ship. By scooping up asteroids, you will find Ruby and Opal stones that can be sold at a station for extra Credits. This activity will attract Captain Orion and his band of space pirates, who will attack and demand you give them your stones.

To fight back, your ship has shields (depleted with each missile hit) and several missiles to start with. Missiles can be upgraded with a missile lock, making them hit automatically in range; otherwise, you need to fire accurately. Destroying a pirate ship will leave behind its cargo for you to pick up, and docking at a station will automatically refill your shields. Here, you can also restock your missiles, give or take a Ray-Stone (your ship can only carry one at a time), and buy a missile lock or a Jump Drive. Each Drive can only be used once, and the same applies to each missile lock. By managing your resources and bringing the five Ray-Stones back to Alcyone Station, you will enter the final confrontation with Captain Orion himself.



For a game made with AMOS, I was fairly impressed with the 3D effect. The asteroids appear lumpy and misshaped, and although there is only one type of enemy craft, movement is good. The problem is that the gameplay does not have enough dimensions to it. Scoop, shoot, rearm, repeat. And the attack pattern of the enemy is also limited. The other aspects of the presentation are fine, with the portraits of the sisters and a nice title tune. I liked the jump effect, too. But a few short sessions of play showed me everything there was to the game, and it did not grab me enough to keep me playing. Aiming for the stars was ambitious, but this game did not quite reach the heights of the classic space trading sims.



I came into Pleiades 3D expecting more 'Elite' bound fun, yet I came away

feeling a little hollow. It's not that Pleiades 3D is a bad game, either. Having been built in AMOS, the 3D world comes over quite well, although what we have here is the least interesting part of Elite. Mining was always something I never looked forward to when playing the game, but knew you could make money from with time and effort. So to have a whole game built around the mechanic, considering there's a whole galaxy to explore, felt a little lacklustre. Sure, enemies show up every so often, but with limited variation, and with only six space stations to explore, I feel this was a huge miss in what could've been an epic exploration between factions, undiscovered societies, new worlds, and everything in between.



PRESENTATION 76%

The simple menu shows you the story and controls, with a decent intro picture, plus easy-to-use in-game options.

GRAPHICS 77%

The asteroids and enemy ships move convincingly in 3D, but there are few objects onscreen.

SOUND 65%

After the reasonable title tune, the sound effects are very sparse and the game lacks ambience as a result.

HOOKABILITY 76%

Initial interest is helped by the straightforward controls, letting you zzap through enemies.

LASTABILITY 66%

The quest has an achievable length that is undermined by the repetition. It's not Elite, that's for sure.

OVERALL 72%

A fun, but limited trip into space that needed more world-building.

fusionretrobooks.com

fusionretrobooks

fusionretrobooks.com



Specs : Any Amiga with 1MB chip RAM and at least 6MB of other RAM. 10MB is now recommended for fast loading of all radio tracks.

Get the game here



Holiday

Lifeschool — 2023 / £free to download

Winter looms over ZZAP! Towers this month, with the office putting out less heat than an overclocked 68030. At this time of year, we all dream of holidays in warmer climates, but thanks to Christmas, we're all a little bereft of cash.

Thankfully, we have *Holiday*, a recently released RPG where you can explore your own place in the sun (Spain, 1988 to be more precise) from the comfort of your own home. With that in mind, our intrepid explorer, Chris, opted to go full-on Judith Chalmers (*Ed: I*

still don't know where he got that dress) and take a virtual flight to give us his vacation review.

[Chris] Hello and welcome to a special edition of *Wish You Were Here...?* Today, we're going to explore the *Holiday* RPG for the Amiga, a game that lets you create your own holiday adventure without all the faff of passports, sunburn, curious lingo, and overdosing on the local lager.

[Cut to Chris/Judith in front of a Commodore Amiga]

Holiday is a game that was released last summer, by Lifeschool22, and tasks you with the simple challenge of surviving 11 days in the 1980s Spanish sunshine. A doddle, you might think, but beware, as some screens contain an instant death scenario!

The apartment is in a beautiful location, and the in-room brochure lays out the attractions, including water skiing, snorkelling, fishing, and of course, boozing and nightlife.

Thanks to the local tourist board, you'll also find helpful guides at the beach and towards the



Holiday is an interesting stab at an Infocom-style RPG that very rarely gets seen nowadays, and I was suitably impressed with the effort made to create a pocket holiday experience within such a small package. While a short game, the care and effort to embody that era of 80s cheap

European travel in all its glory while setting reasonable objectives ensures that this may be a game that a few seasoned adventurers may want to try between popular releases. Overall, a pleasant experience that deserves a look.



ZZAP! TEST

retail strip to help you traverse your way around this holiday hotspot.

During your travels, you'll find an array of helpful items to purchase or pick up that'll make your holiday experience more expansive, and as with all holidays, the more you're prepared to venture off the beaten path, the more likely you are to find some unique and memorable locations.

[Cut to outside footage, Chris/Judith wandering the virtual strip]

The game is very easy to play, thanks to the intuitive interface and simple controls. You can use the mouse to move your character, select items, access menus,

and traverse from screen to screen.

The Spanish locale feels vibrant, with a varied ambience of period music available on a couple of local radio stations for you to relax to as you wander. Be mindful, though, that you do have an 11-day itinerary to keep to on your overall experience, so deviating from this could bear disastrous consequences.

Graphics-wise, the photos are rendered as well as can be for the era, giving the ambience needed. But what of the cost breakdown? Well, for our journey, we appear to be in luck, as the sales reps who distribute these tickets are presently offering this holiday package at a bargain price.



This takes me back to my first overseas holiday, to Mallorca, as a geeky 15-year-old. Not quite

confident enough to meet friends or girls, an inexperienced drinker having no trouble getting served, and not really wanting to join in with the chit-chat of my mum and sister, I spent a lot of time wandering around, analysing and people-watching. I have a feeling the author of this game had a similar experience when these photos were taken. This is an awesome slice of personal history wrapped up in a simple but fun RPG. What a great way to spend a wintry afternoon in Blighty.

PRESENTATION 75%

Menu system is very well organised and presented.

GRAPHICS 77%

Simple point and click graphics overlay the digitised photographs of sunny Spain.

SOUND 69%

A couple of simple SFX radio stations to get you in the mood

HOOKABILITY 73%

May be confusing to start, but will fall into place once you are involved in the story.

LASTABILITY 64%

Like most Spanish holidays, your best experience comes from your first visit.

OVERALL 70%

"If we took a holiday, took some time to celebrate, just one day out of life, it would be, it would be so nice..."

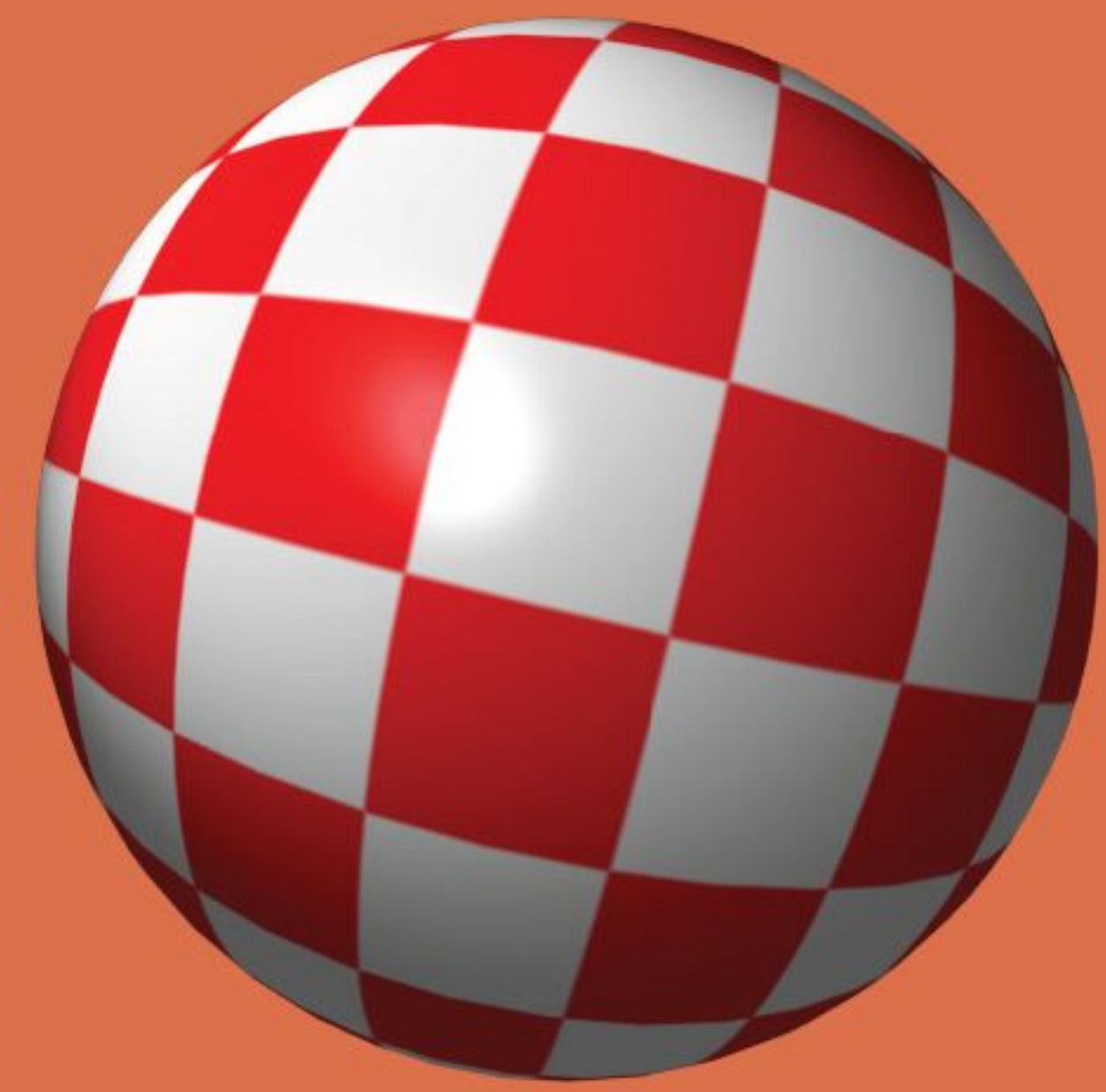


Dune II

Publisher: Westwood Associates

Developer: Virgin Games

Year of Release: 1993



Often regarded as the father of modern strategy games, *Dune II* took the original concept of turn-by-turn strategy games and quickened the pace, upping the challenge by bringing combat into real-time. Taking cues from the Frank Herbert classic novel, and utilising some visual inspiration from the 1984 movie, Westwood pits the user via the Padishah Emperor to battle against the other great houses for control of Arrakis. The house that produces the most Spice wins control; how you achieve that goal is down to you. Each house maintains its own specialised troops and vehicles, with the Atreides utilising the local Fremen and their tech to remain flexible but overwhelming. Harkonens may be slow but are battle-ready, utilising their natural strength to overpower, while the Ordos take a tactful approach, manipulating the enemy and sabotaging their way to victory. While this seems daunting at first, each of the nine levels gradually introduces you to each unit, slowly ramping up the difficulty as you progress to the conclusion in the battle for world domination. Managing the battle and each enemy is the key to success, and understanding your units' advantages and weaknesses is critical to ensuring each battle doesn't turn against you.

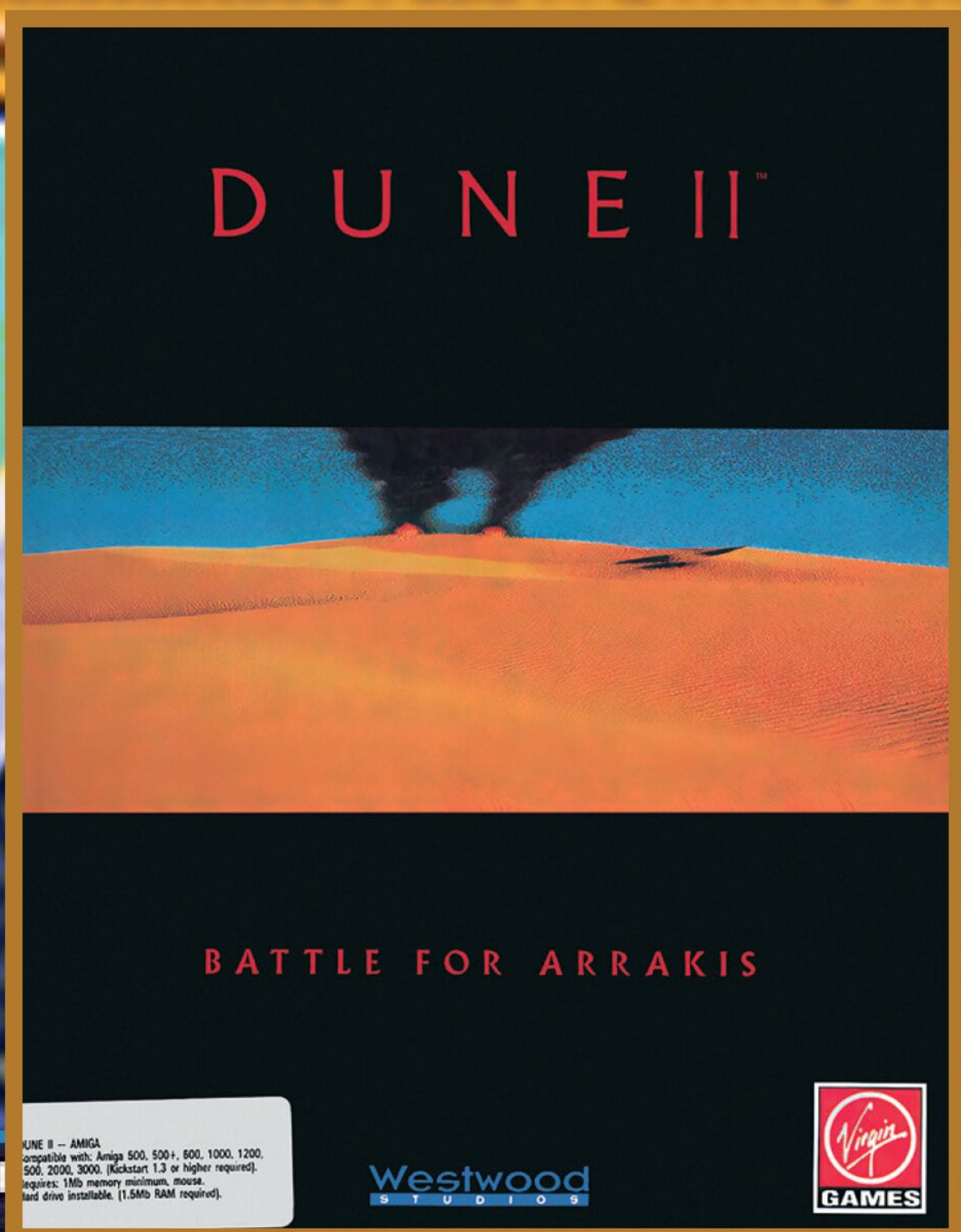
Chris Thacker: Infinitely replayable and, thanks to the A.I. inclusion and the wealth of unit types on all sides, no two games will ever be the same. Of course, that's not to say there aren't faults. The A.I. can be manipulated with experience, and the lack of audio cues for both enemy attacks and troop confirmations will frustrate players of later Westwood titles. But as a pioneer of the genre that took inspiration from the likes of *Civilization*, *Populous*, and *Herzog Zwei*, to name a few, to create something special, you owe it to yourself to play it just once.





op Power Center

Cost: 3



DEMOSCENE

◆ LEGENDS ◆

Amiga demos come in many different shapes and sizes. From the humble intro, up to the medium-sized dentro, onto the epic mega demo, which then technically evolved into the 'trackmo'. Many are memorable, and the best become legends. *Hardwired* falls into the latter category. It has been said that this isn't just a legendary demo, but "The Demo", end of conversation. I'm Judge Drokk, founding member of Anarchy, and this is the place where I, along with some well-chosen friends C64Audio's Chris Abbott, artist Danny Geurtsen, and musician Teo of Rebels, celebrate these titular 'legends'. Has someone got their wires tangled or is this really "The Demo"? Let's find out...

Hardwired by Crionics and The Silents, December 1991



When visiting the cinema in the 1980s to watch a film directed by Steven Spielberg, you knew you were in for a great experience, regardless of the genre.

The same could be applied to the demoscene, especially when you see the 1,2 name drop of musician Jesper Kyd and artist Michael Balle. A pair of names that solidified their demoscene status with the release of *Hardwired*, but also coincided with the release of *Global Trash II*, the first (and, for many years, the best) 'Wild-Demo' - a category that was invented for competition entries that didn't fit into any other genre. Both launched at the 'Crystal/Silents/Anarchy: The Party' in Denmark in 1991: the world's biggest-ever Amiga

party.

Despite its legacy and immense popularity, it may be surprising to some that *Hardwired* didn't actually win the demo competition but was runner-up. It could have been much worse; the hopeful entry from 'Anal-Intruders' was an also-ran along with over 30 others, as *Voyage* from Razor-1911 snatched third place.

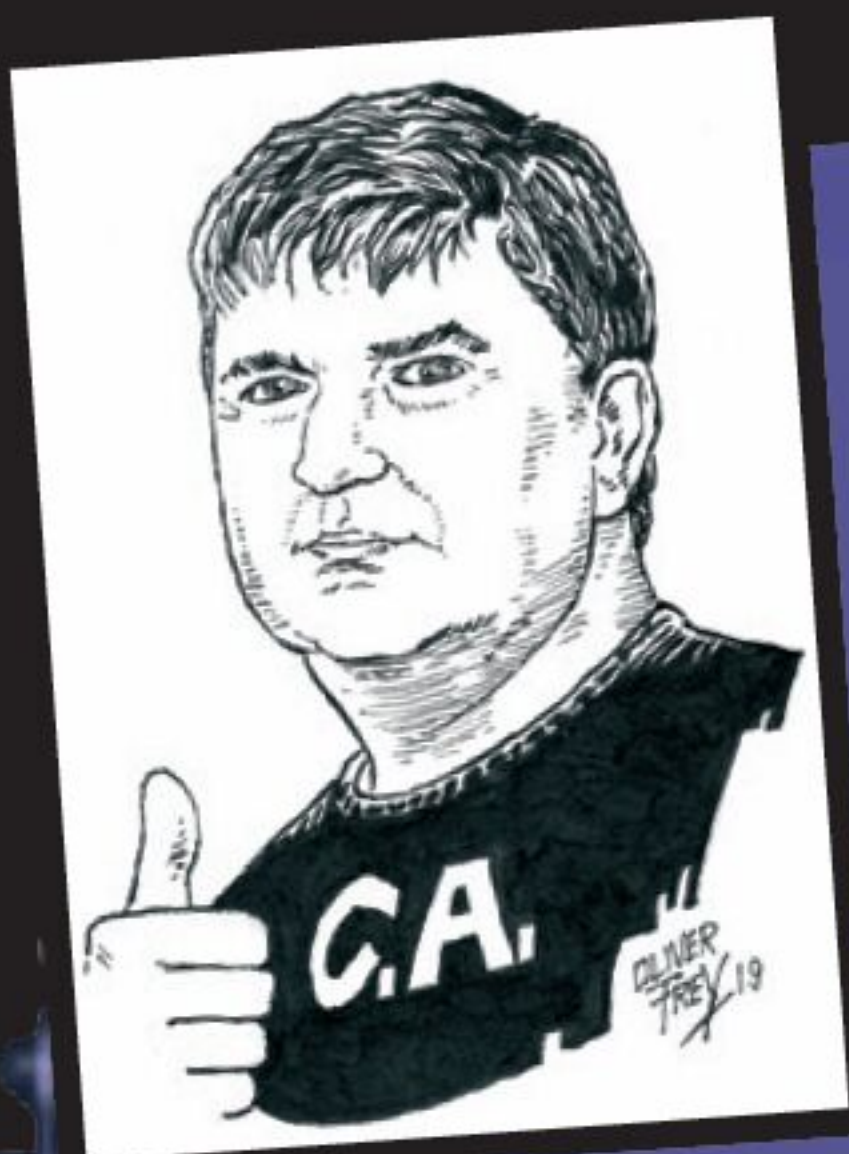
Hardwired was a revolutionary demo, managing to be atmospheric, cinematic, epic, and original, and never boring for a moment of its generous runtime. Casting an eye over critical opinion of the release from a decade or so after saw watchers celebrating how it's "as fresh now as it was upon release". Here we are now, 32 years after the event, and I'm still shaking my head at that 2nd place result!



It is such a long time ago. As I remember, the design was very limited by the code, but the name, Hardwired, was based on a fascination with ASIC design of the 68040 chip. On the technical side, many of the demo parts were quite original, as I remember. Dot-morphing 'splines', and the JELL-O vector. We also made some high-throughput demos, the fastest at the time, but compared to the work we have done later in games, it was all cheating, but it was fun figuring out ways to make something look like more than it was. It was the first demo we developed as a team together for a long time. I think we spent a month where we met every weekend and worked together.



Art and Music Legends Remember 'Hardwired'



Wildly impressive visuals and a boomy intro sequence that would fit right in as the credits of a contemporary crime series. Once the music starts, you begin to hear where Jesper Kyd's journey from massive David

Whittaker fan to legendary composer started: in this semi-original semi-tribute to both Panther (backing) and Shadow of the Beast (flute lead). Of course, Jesper has more talent than to just cover things and weaves a more intricate web from the Whittingredients. With a lengthy demo timeline to fill, Jesper mixes, matches, and extends like a good 'un. Of course, if I had been watching this in 1991 I would have been impressed by the graphics too, though the intro graphics before the music starts are by far the highlight.

Chris Abbott of C64Audio.com



'Hardwired', a noteworthy demo from Crionics and Silents, emerged during the peak point era of the Amiga demoscene, characterized

by its distinctive artistic flair and technical innovation. Released with much anticipation, the demo captivated audiences with its visually striking elements and showcased the creative prowess of its creators. The production, laden with impressive technical achievements and state-of-the-art graphics, became a significant contender at the prestigious 'The Party 91' event, one of the first major international demoscene events, organized by Crystal (melon.), Silents, and Anarchy: the party itself setting new landmarks in the demoscene history. Despite its undeniable merits, "Hardwired" faced formidable competition at the Party 91, falling short against the 40+ minutes long demo epic "Odyssey" from the Swiss demogroup Alcatraz. However, the demo's enduring impact resonated within the Amiga demo scene, leaving an indelible mark on the creative landscape of that period. Through its fusion of Mikael Balle's artistic vision accompanied by Jesper Kyd's pumping industrial soundtrack and the coding team's technical brilliance, "Hardwired" remains a testament to the ingenuity and passion of its creators, contributing to the rich tapestry of demos that defined the Amiga computing experience during this dynamic era, giving inspirations to many for the later years.

Teo of Rebels



This is truly one of those demos that you will never forget, especially if you were lucky enough, as I was, to have seen it the way it was meant to be seen. Back in the 90s at a demo party, surrounded by Amigas and like-minded friends, its impressive effects shining from the big screen and Jesper Kyd's memorable MOD blaring out of a colossal pair of speakers, you knew right from the start that this wasn't just another ordinary demo. Hardwired fuelled the imagination of an entire generation of Amiga demo sceners and set a new standard for what could be achieved in this new and burgeoning art form.

@ danny_geurtsen

AMIGA™ MEMOIRS



AMIGA musician Tim Wright shares his memoirs on the AMIGA's sound chip, PAULA, and the impact 'she' had on the gaming and music scene.

When is an AMIGA not an AMIGA? The freedom, access, and innovation that the AMIGA's PAULA sound chip brought to the world of computer audio in the late 80s cannot be overstated.

At first, it was simply how the computer would bring games and applications to life with music and sound effects. But it was soon thereafter adopted by many would-be musicians as a way of developing their own music demos and backing tracks. Over time, a very distinct and recognizable form of music would emerge, and have a life and style of its own, courtesy of a handful of samples that came supplied for free with the now-legendary *SoundTracker* software. These were sounds sampled from a number of synthesizers and drum machines of the time, such as the Yamaha DX100, Casio CZ101, Roland D50, and so on.

With the addition of MIDI and Sampler hardware, and for very little outlay, you could have the core of a performant and

professional-sounding studio.

Case in point, when I made the transition from creating music for AMIGA games per se, I didn't leave my AMIGA 1200 by the wayside – far from it. I invested in The Blue Ribbon Soundwork's *Bars & Pipes* MIDI sequencing software, and made use of it to compose music on several CD audio quality productions, for example, games such as *WipEout*, *Colony Wars*, *Krazy Ivan*, *Formula One*, and many more besides, not to mention many a Psygnosis promotional or marketing video.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves a little... let's rewind to the late 80s.

Back in the days when I was still working in a converted warehouse on the Liverpool docks, and Psygnosis could still fit all their employees in an average-sized McDonalds, I was penning music on my AMIGA 1200 using ProTracker and using a hardware sampler to record sounds from my synth keyboards and doing actual Foley - real

footsteps, thuds, scrapes, zaps. Then, one day, I was approached to produce music for the Sega MegaDrive / MegaCD.

I had zero experience composing for an FM sound chip, so I was initially a bit puzzled. However, it turns out that they wanted my AMIGA compositional skills, because the programmers had developed a 4-channel sample-based music mixer that could emulate (minus the forced stereo) the AMIGA's sound playback. And so, it would come to pass that I would compose music and create sound effects using AMIGA methodologies and tracker formats for many games on this platform.

Games such as *Sensible Soccer*, *Phoenix Rising*



The Yamaha DX100

Tim looking rather glum as the AMIGA's days are numbered.

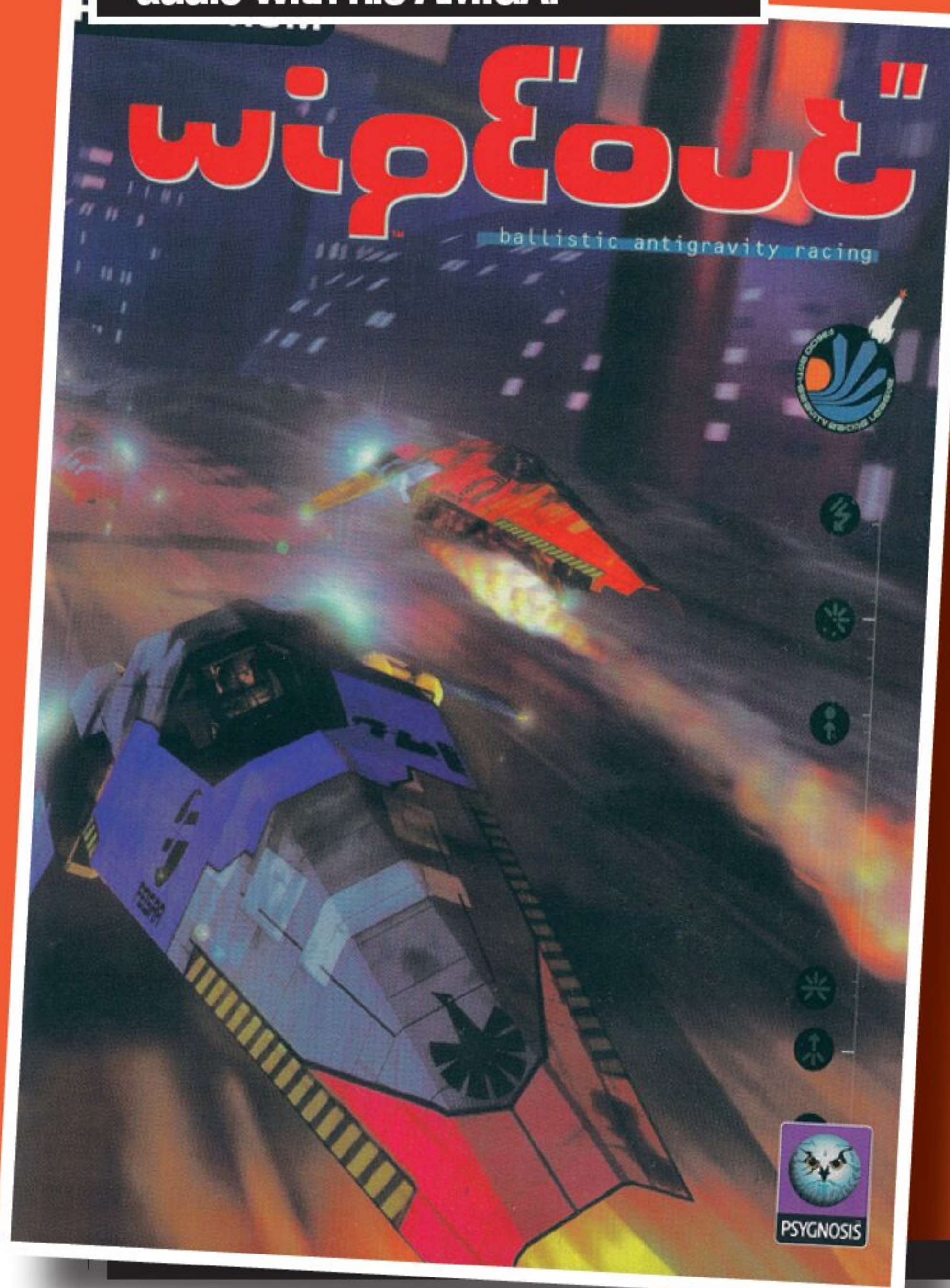


(unreleased), *Mary Shelly's Frankenstein*, *Last Action Hero*, *Microcosm*, *No Escape*, and *Mickey Mania*, to name but a few.

But let's rewind even further...

Even before this, when I was working as a database programmer on mainframe computers for

Tim produced CD-quality audio with his AMIGA.



Littlewoods in the centre of Liverpool, and hobbying as a musician for Psygnosis, I had already experienced how ubiquitous the AMIGA was. Thanks to some clever programming by TCB, and then Equinox (demo-scene folks), my AMIGA SoundTracker MOD music files could be played back on the ATARI ST range of computers, and this would double my licensing revenue – just compose once, then get paid for its use on two platforms! It also meant I could compose music on the AMIGA for ATARI ST-only games, too. I recall doing this at least once for a game called *Lost Souls*. Sure, you'd have to make some minor tweaks, or ditch some of the cleverer effects the AMIGA could do, but largely it was two bites at the cherry.

All told, I would compose music on the

AMIGA beginning in 1988 on my (t)rusty A500, and then on an AMIGA 1200 right through to Tellurian Defence on the PSOne in 1998. A full decade of native PAULA music, conversions to other platforms, and CD audio compositions emulating full orchestra, before finally having to retire my AMIGA set-up and move over to the Propellerhead Reason DAW on PC. Truth be told, there were features that I made use of in the Bars & Pipes MIDI software on AMIGA that I still miss to this day – it was rather unique in its approach to handling MIDI data. But times move on, and the AMIGA wasn't capable of easily handling multi-channel streams of full-quality audio.

This, however, would not be the end of the story.

In the early 2000s, I was approached to create music for quiz games on the Nintendo DS and Wii platforms. I had no preconceived notions on how I would compose or deliver music for these formats, but I was assured it wouldn't be a problem. When it came time to start work, I was asked for 16-channel Tracker songs – not really something I was expecting!

True enough, I wouldn't be dusting down my AMIGA 1200, but it would require me to call upon

all the skills I'd mastered back in the day and put them to good use on my PC using MODPlug Tracker, the most modern incarnation of the original AMIGA SoundTracker. It must be said, I was rather creaky and scratched my head for an hour or so, but I got back into the swing quite quickly. Word got around that I was back into composing MOD files, and I would end up writing a few Nintendo soundtracks using MODPlug Tracker, and I was even invited to contribute to a couple of MOD file Soundtracker music compilation demos.

Slide forward to the 2020s, and the Tracker format is still alive and well! Even more exciting is the fact that there are several new hardware-based products that allow us old-skool types to re-live the good ol' days, in high quality and on-the-go. Of course, I succumbed and purchased the Polyend Tracker, and, more recently, the Dirtywave M8. Both have their strengths, and both are great fun when I want to stretch my tracker-format legs.

This memoir has spanned my entire musical career, more or less, and has hopefully left you feeling proud, as I do, of the massive impact the AMIGA had on the entire gaming sound canvas over the past three decades

(and there's so much more that could be said).

I've not really touched upon the AMIGA being used by professional chart musicians, either using the audio directly or as a MIDI sequencer. For example, British duo *Dex and Jonesey*, who worked with stars such as Phil Collins, Lionel Richie, and Josh Wink. I even used the AMIGA voice synthesizer software to generate the verbal alerts for *WipEout* on the PlayStation. It crops up in way more places than you might imagine!

I only feel qualified to write about audio too, but there's so much more that the AMIGA has contributed, in the form of developing artwork, visuals, and even video editing. I'll leave that to someone else to cover, though.

Tim en-route to London to sign with Psygnosis.



Updated cover versions of my AMIGA and Mega-Drive / MegaCD tunes.



A Demo Scene song that began life as a Nintendo DS MOD file for a quiz game, and was then used as a vs. piece for fun and giggles, composed using my AMIGA tracker skills but on MOD Plug Tracker.

ARCADE CONVERSIONS PART 1



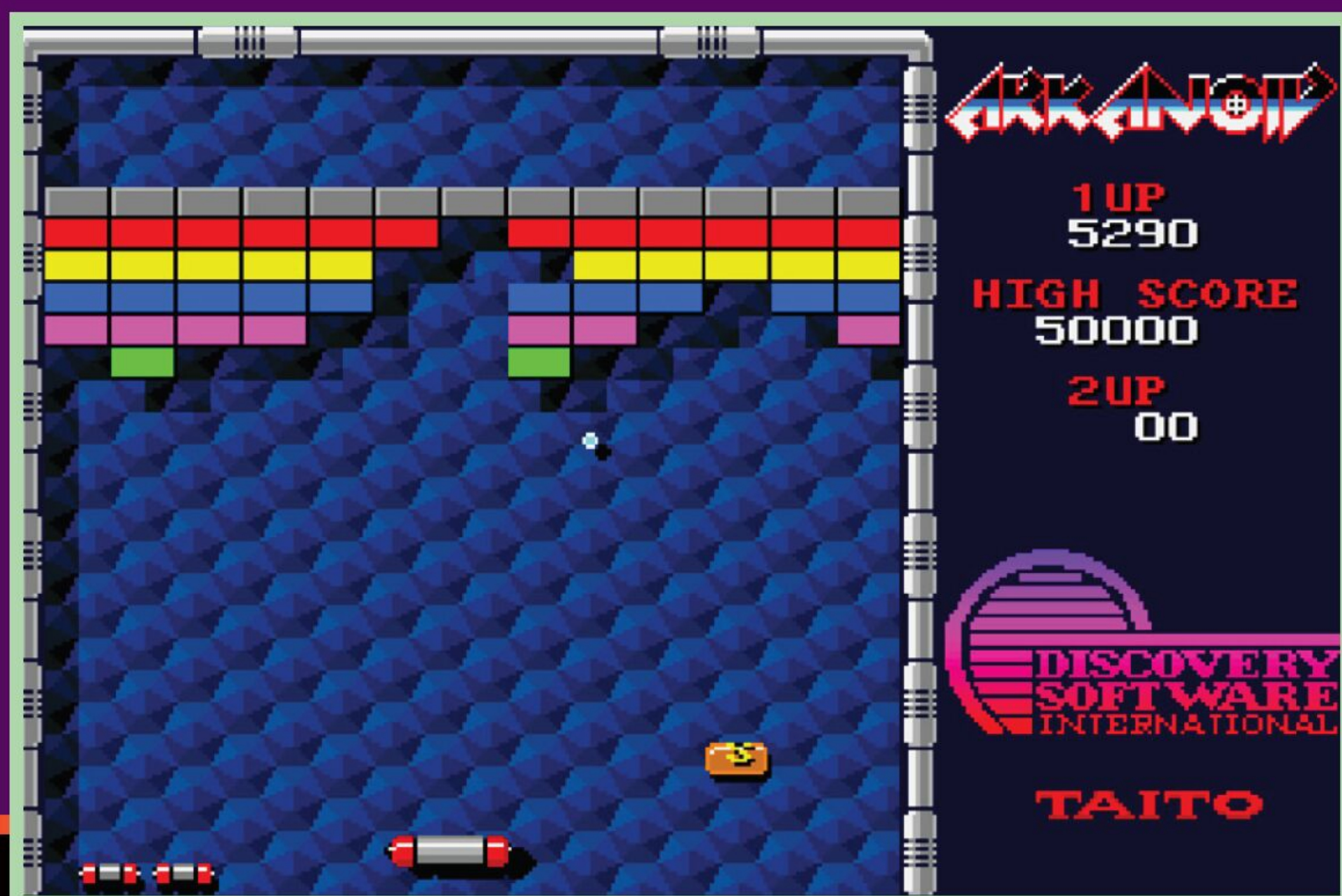
If, like myself, you grew up on the 8-bit microcomputers, then no doubt every summer you'd spend part

of your holidays visiting your local arcade. These darkened, musty rooms filled with a neon glow of entertainment, and the whirring bleeps of a multitude of titles, each beckoning for your hard-earned cash, made you yearn for the day when our home experiences could match the high-tech wizardry within these four walls.

Once the Amiga graced the scene with its advanced graphics and sound, one of the genres that the Amiga excelled at was arcade conversions. In the first of this series, we'll take a look at some of the best arcade conversions that were made for the Amiga, and how they compared to their original counterparts.

ARKANOID

Arkanoid was a classic *Breakout*-style game that was released by Taito in 1986. The player controlled a paddle that bounced a ball against a wall of bricks, destroying them and collecting power-ups. The game had 32 levels, each with different layouts and enemies. The Amiga conversion was faithful to the arcade version, with no noticeable difference in gameplay or graphics. It was one of the first games to use the mouse as a controller, which made it more intuitive and responsive than using a joystick.





There's something genius about utilising the Amiga's mouse to replace the spinner controls that feels just as intuitive, especially against other home conversions. With all the bonuses and features replicated here, with a few creative enhancements added, the spirit of the arcade machine is represented well. Obviously mileage may vary depending on your enjoyment of the 'bat and ball' mechanic. but it's a solid pass!



Using the mouse to control the Vaus (bat) is very smooth, making it feel a lot like the arcade cabinet's spinner. The graphics and sound did a great job of replicating the arcade, too. One interesting fact is that the US release through Taito US had an extra 33 levels - based on the American arcade update called Tournament Arkanoid. The magazine reviews at the time were mixed, but it captures the spirit of the game well and is still playable. For me, it's a close run thing between this and Giganoid for which is the more playable.

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Midnight Resistance was a run-and-gun game that was released by Data East in 1989. The player controlled a soldier who had to rescue his family from a terrorist organization. The game had nine levels, each with different weapons, enemies, and bosses. The Amiga conversion was released in 1990 by Ocean Software, and it was a solid port of the arcade game. It had more colours than the original, but also less parallax scrolling and smaller sprites. The game also used the keyboard for rotating the gun, which made it less intuitive than using a rotary joystick.



I'm a big fan of the soundtrack to this and the C64 version, Keith Tinman doing a great job of capturing the military theme.

The graphics are excellent too, with plenty of variety and detail. Special FX worked hard to cram such a graphically intense coin-op into the home machines while maintaining the changing gameplay and attack patterns. If there was one major complaint - and it holds true for the original - then it would be the way you can drop and lose your keys offscreen. Given that they are essential for getting extra weapons in the shop, and ultimately for rescuing your relatives, this is so frustrating. Nine large levels mixing up horizontal and vertical scrolling, with plenty of different enemy types and those huge bosses to beat, make this a tough-but-achievable game. Sign me up for one more tour of duty.



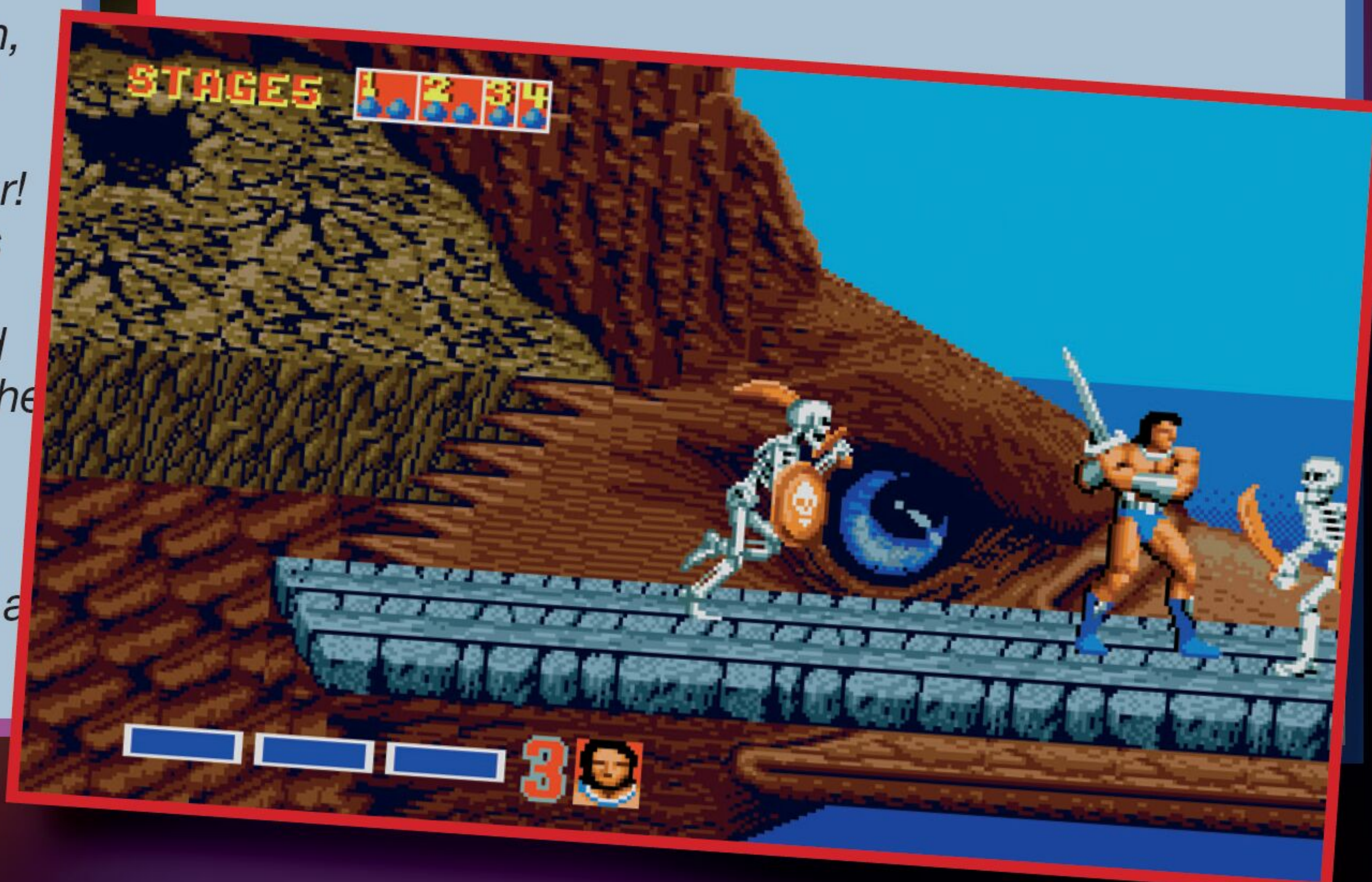
Golden Axe was a hack-and-slash game that was released by Sega in 1989. The player could choose from three characters: Ax Battler, Tyris Flare, or Gilius Thunderhead, who had to fight their way through hordes of enemies and ride on various creatures to reach the final boss, Death Adder. The game had nine levels, each with different settings and enemies. The Amiga conversion was released in 1990 by Virgin Games, and it was a decent port of the arcade game. However, it had fewer colours and less animation in the background scenery, which made it look less vibrant and detailed than the original.



This looks the part, with great graphics that almost match the arcade. The magic effects were a letdown though, especially compared to the brilliant C64 adaptation. Music certainly does its best to live up to the coin-op, and I love that ending sequence (where the characters and enemies jump out of the arcade machine). Having two players simultaneously is great fun though, even if you can accidentally hurt each other or steal the food/potions the other player is going for! The presentation between levels does a really good job, with the map screens loading rapidly and not holding up play too much. The difficulty level is noticeably a bit easier than the coin-op, without being too easy to ruin long-term challenge. A solid conversion of a classic game.



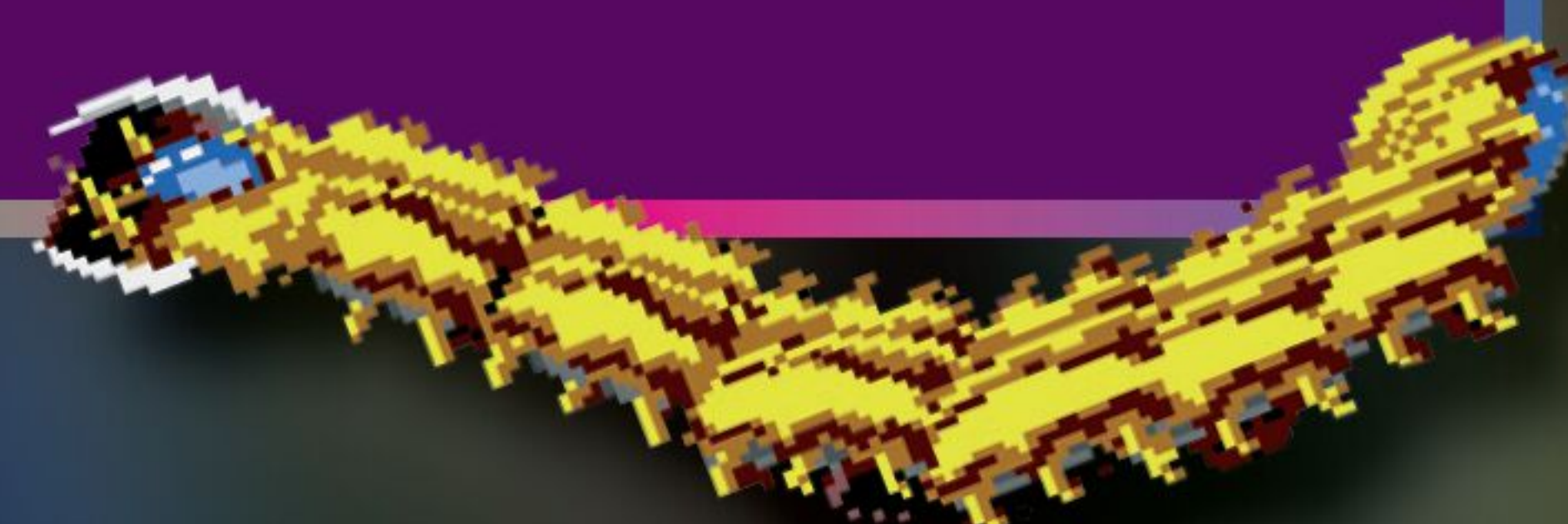
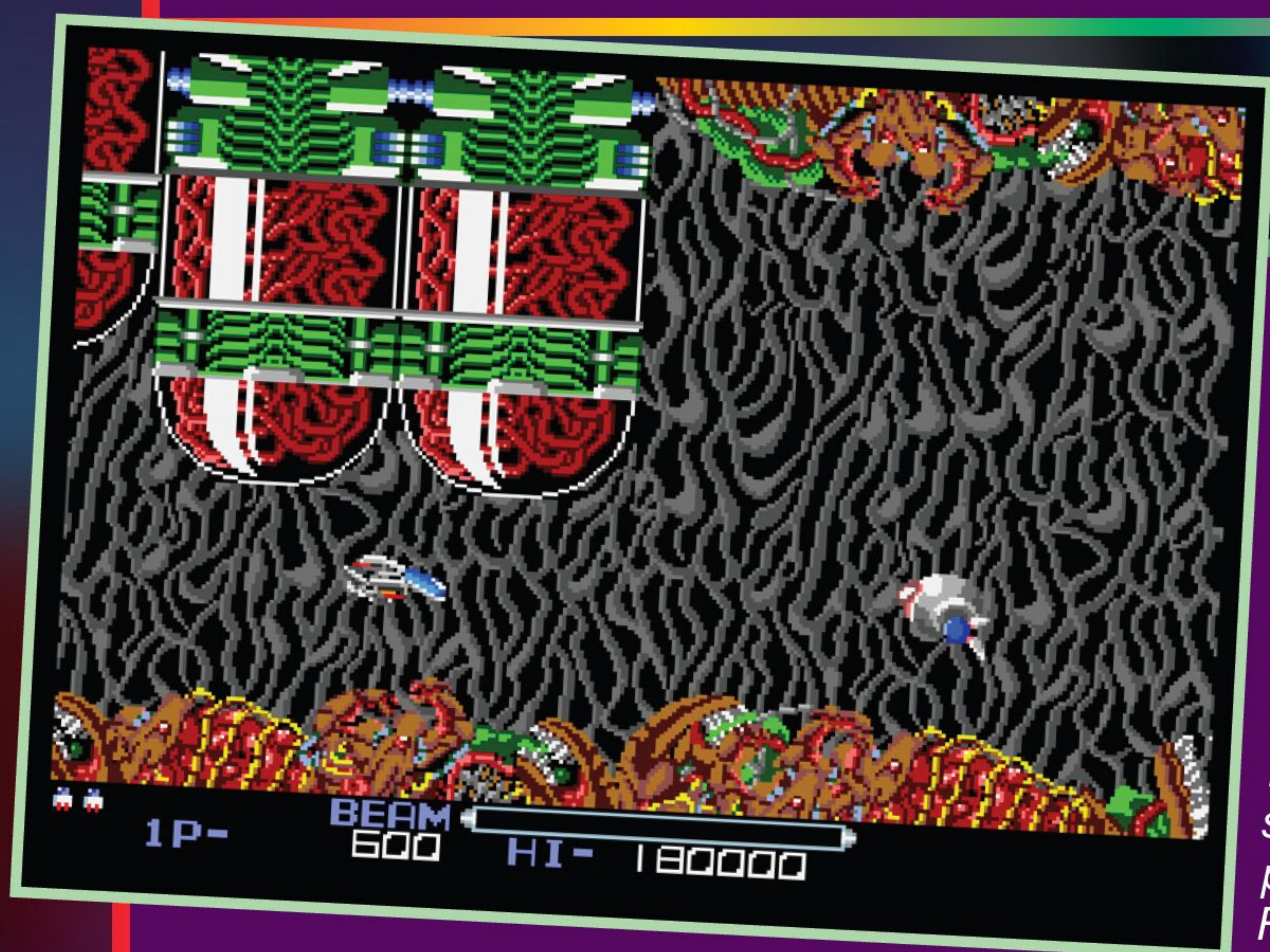
Golden Axe is a hack 'n' slash like no other, and the Amiga conversion is top notch graphics-wise, which is great for a side-scrolling beat 'em up game that is known for its quirky characters and fun gameplay. Sure, the magic effects aren't up to snuff, but the team kept in the rest of the detail and levels of the original. Importantly, the music score is similar in style to the original, composed by the legendary Nakamura Koshiro that created a soundscape, and immersed you into a fantasy world. With this conversion you felt like you got the whole adventure, and not the abridged version.



R-TYPE

R-Type was a shoot-em-up game that was released by Irem in 1987. The player controlled a spaceship called the R-9 that had to fight against an alien race called the Bydo Empire.

The game had eight levels, each with different enemies, obstacles, and bosses. The Amiga conversion was released in 1989 by Electric Dreams Software, and it was an excellent port of the arcade game. It had almost identical graphics and sound to the original, with only minor differences such as no moving background in some levels. For *R-Type* fans, *Katakis* was a similar experience - so similar that Activision forced US Gold to rework the game and release it under the new name *Denaris*.

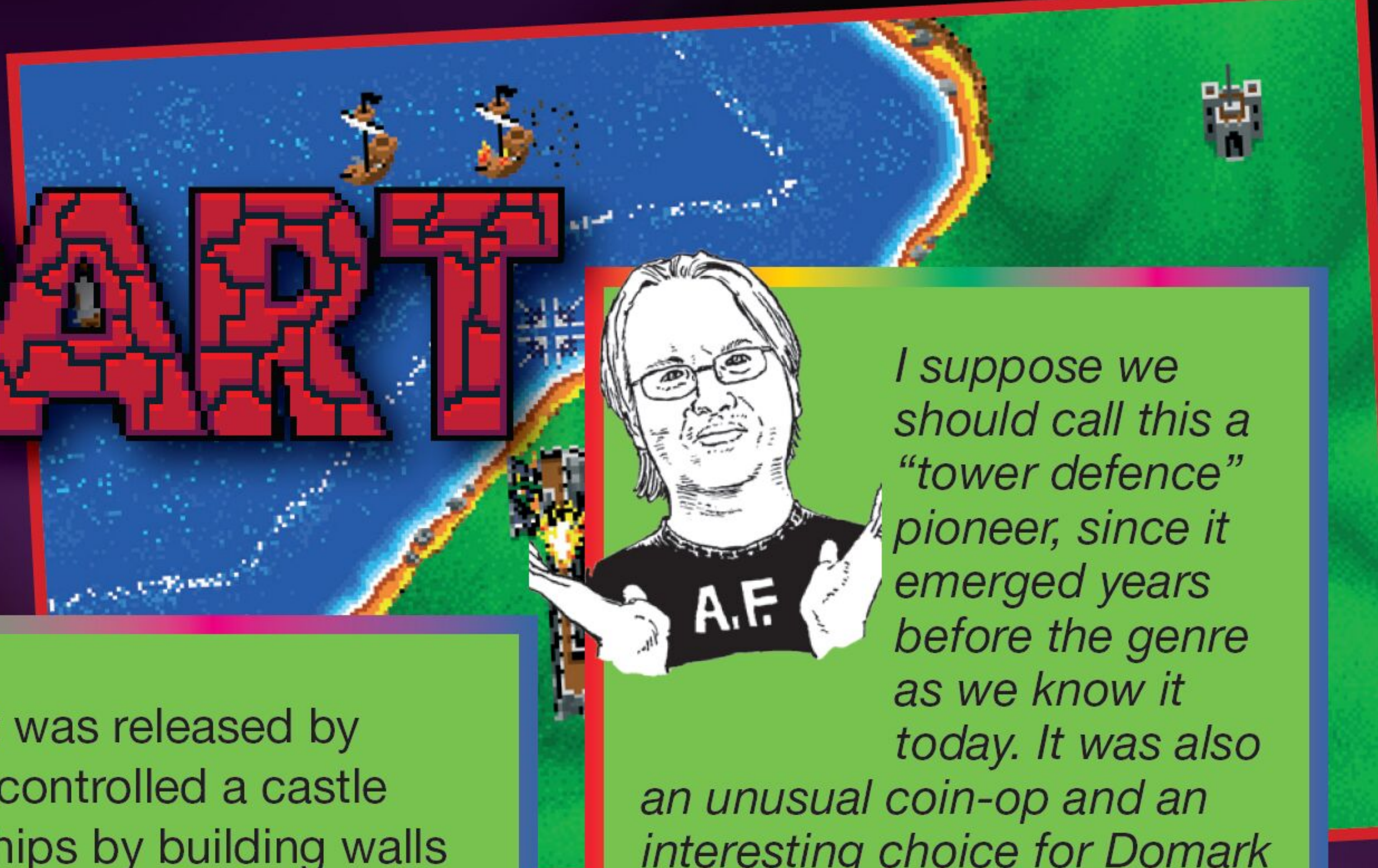


R-Type is simply a great game that has stood the test of time, and the Amiga conversion was spot on. Its difficulty is part of what makes it so enjoyable, and the transition to home computer didn't result in a loss to the impressive graphics. There's a reason while we all compare current shoot 'em ups to this game, and that purely down to the level of polish Factor 5 applied to make this such a memorable release.



I wasn't the biggest fan of the arcade game, feeling it relied too heavily on spectacular setpieces to wow the player. But the conversions did a great job in bringing the game home, and the Amiga is up there with the best (probably only bettered at the time by the PC Engine port). Factor 5 earned their Sizzler - and a Conversion Factor of 97 - from ZZAP!, with smooth scrolling, huge bosses, and authentic attack waves in all the right places. Mastering the Force pod will see you get further into the game, helped along by Chris Huelsbeck's memorable soundtrack. I know plenty of shoot 'em up fans got addicted to this great conversion, which still holds up today.

RAMPART



Rampart was a strategy game that was released by Atari Games in 1990. The player controlled a castle that had to defend itself from enemy ships by building walls and cannons. The game had three phases: building phase, battle phase, and repair phase. The Amiga conversion was released in 1992 by Domark Software, and it was a faithful port of the arcade game. It had no difference in gameplay or graphics from the original, and it also supported up to three players in multiplayer mode.



I suppose we should call this a "tower defence" pioneer, since it emerged years before the genre as we know it today. It was also an unusual coin-op and an interesting choice for Domark (under their Tengen deal) to bring to home computers. The unusual mix of repairing your castle and then defending it (as a solo player) is such a different idea; it takes a while to click, and then becomes increasingly difficult to succeed. There's also the multiplayer modes, with up to three humans able to play at the same time. The controls never feel as fluent as the arcade's trackball, either with the mouse or joystick, but it is that rapidly increasing difficulty that will put you off. Graphics for the most part are OK, and the sound is straightforward. If the game grabs you, it's worth persevering.



Let's not beat around the bush too much here; Rampart is a good coin-up conversion that takes this trailblazer of the Tower defence genre and faithfully recreates the graphics, sound, and gameplay onto your home computer. Where it suffers primarily, however, is the control scheme used. Without the trackball interface, the replacement control scheme can be a bit frustrating, especially if you go down the joystick route to manage your castle. Factor that with the sharp difficulty increase and you may find the conversion a frustrating experience compared to the arcade original. It's still worth a look at as the fledgling title that helped define a genre, but more so for its multiplayer efforts.



Rainbow Islands was a platformer game that was released by Taito in 1987. It was a sequel to *Bubble Bobble*, but with a different gameplay mechanic. The player controlled Bub or Bob, who could create rainbows that could be used as platforms or weapons. The game had seven worlds, each with four levels and a boss. The Amiga conversion was published in 1990 by Ocean Software and developed by Graftgold, and it was a great port of the arcade game. However, it had fewer levels than the original, as some worlds were omitted due to memory limitations.



Bub and Bob have had a troubled life; first transformed into dinosaurs, then their girlfriends kidnapped! It's no wonder when they came

back they set up the Rainbow Islands (think Tenerife but with more cake), only to find a disturbing new clientele have set up camp, turning a happy set of islands into a destructive children's birthday party gone wrong! Robin, Phil, and Randy gave this a 92% Sizzler award back in ZZAP! issue #53, and it's not difficult to see why. A wonderful adventure with cute but devilish bosses and gameplay that has you running back for more every time you play. It's a must-have!



I have seen the arcade cabinet Graftgold had during development, in its current resting place in Andrew Braybrook's house (Whoops, I appear to have dropped a name there). And what an amazing job they did! Jason Page's music is absolutely spot

on, John Cumming produced gorgeous and cute graphics for all the different islands, and Andrew's code makes the whole game play so smoothly. The only negative is that the three hidden islands are missing - mainly because the team did not reach them during development! This is among the best arcade conversions on the Amiga, and even the contract delay (originally to have been published by Firebird and then finally released by Ocean) didn't dampen the enthusiasm. ZZAP's 92% Sizzler was followed a few issues later by a news piece saying it should have been a Gold Medal - and I wholeheartedly agree. Somewhere over the rainbow, all arcade conversions were made this well.



Super Hang-On was a racing game that was released by Sega in 1987. It was a sequel to Hang-On, but with improved graphics and gameplay. The player controlled a motorcycle that had to race against time and other bikers on various tracks. The game had four modes: original mode, arcade mode, beginner mode and expert mode. The Amiga conversion was released in 1989 by Electric Dreams Software, and it was a faithful port of the arcade game. It had no difference in gameplay or graphics to the original, and it also supported mouse control for steering.



This narrowly missed out on a Sizzler, getting 89% - an impressive effort from first-time Amiga coder ZZKJ, who also did the ST version. But Electric Dreams went all out

to give this version better graphics, resulting in a superb 3D effect. Using the mouse to control a motorbike may seem an odd idea, but here, it worked well. And a brief multiloop between tracks meant the gameplay kept up the pace. The one aspect that was a little disappointing was the sound, with a fairly feeble engine sound and adaptations of the arcade music that could have been better. The other drawback was the limited number of tracks, representing four different continents and increasing in difficulty, which was, of course, the case in the arcade original. It would face stiff competition from other motorbike racing games in later years, but this was a decent way to play the Sega classic at home - beaten only by the enhanced Mega Drive cartridge that came with a more in-depth "career" mode.



If you played the full-sized arcade machine, then you'll understand why this has a place in most arcade enthusiasts' hearts. Yet while we can't port the full cab experience to our home, the team did a cracking job with the conversion. The gripes here, however, are the lacklustre sound effects and limited tracks, which make this experience a poor comparison to the Megadrive counterpart with its beautiful career mode featuring store and password system. This could've been more.

SILKWORM

Silkworm was a shoot-em-up game that was released by Tecmo in 1988. It featured co-operative gameplay where one player controlled a helicopter and the other a jeep. The game had eight levels, each with different enemies and bosses. The Amiga conversion was released in 1989 by Virgin Games, and it was a superb port of the arcade game. It had more colours and better sound than the original, as well as faster shooting frequency and smoother scrolling.



I have long been a fan of the C64 conversion, but the Amiga one is just as good - earning a 92% Sizzler from ZZAP! back in the day. The graphics are incredibly good, really capturing the look of the coin-op and including touches such as lightning flashes. The Barry Leitch title tune and in-game effects are brilliant, too. But it's the gameplay that is the real star,

whichever vehicle you choose - or even better, play with a friend and get the extra firepower to blast your way through the multiple levels. The changing backgrounds add some variety, although there are a limited number of enemy types. The bosses are challenging, and it's always fun to try and blast the giant Goosecopter to bits before it fully assembles (earning double the power-ups if you do manage it in time, a handy tip). You don't have to put lots of coins into this one to master it, but it puts up a stern fight.



A fairly accurate conversion, featuring all the key elements of the arcade making this

bullet-fest for the eyes a smooth and fluid experience that only increases in enjoyment if playing with a friend. As conversions go, the key ingredients are there, from the boss patterns to the advanced powerups and beyond. An excellent game that scored 92% in the Summer of 89 with ZZAP! issue 49 and one to check out.



THE NEWZEALAND STORY

The New Zealand Story was a platformer game that was released by Taito in 1988.

The player-controlled Tiki, a kiwi bird who had to rescue his friends from a walrus. The game had five worlds, each with four levels and a boss. The Amiga conversion was released in 1990 by Ocean Software, and it was a fantastic port of the arcade game. It had almost identical graphics and sound to the original, with only minor differences such as smaller sprites and less parallax scrolling.

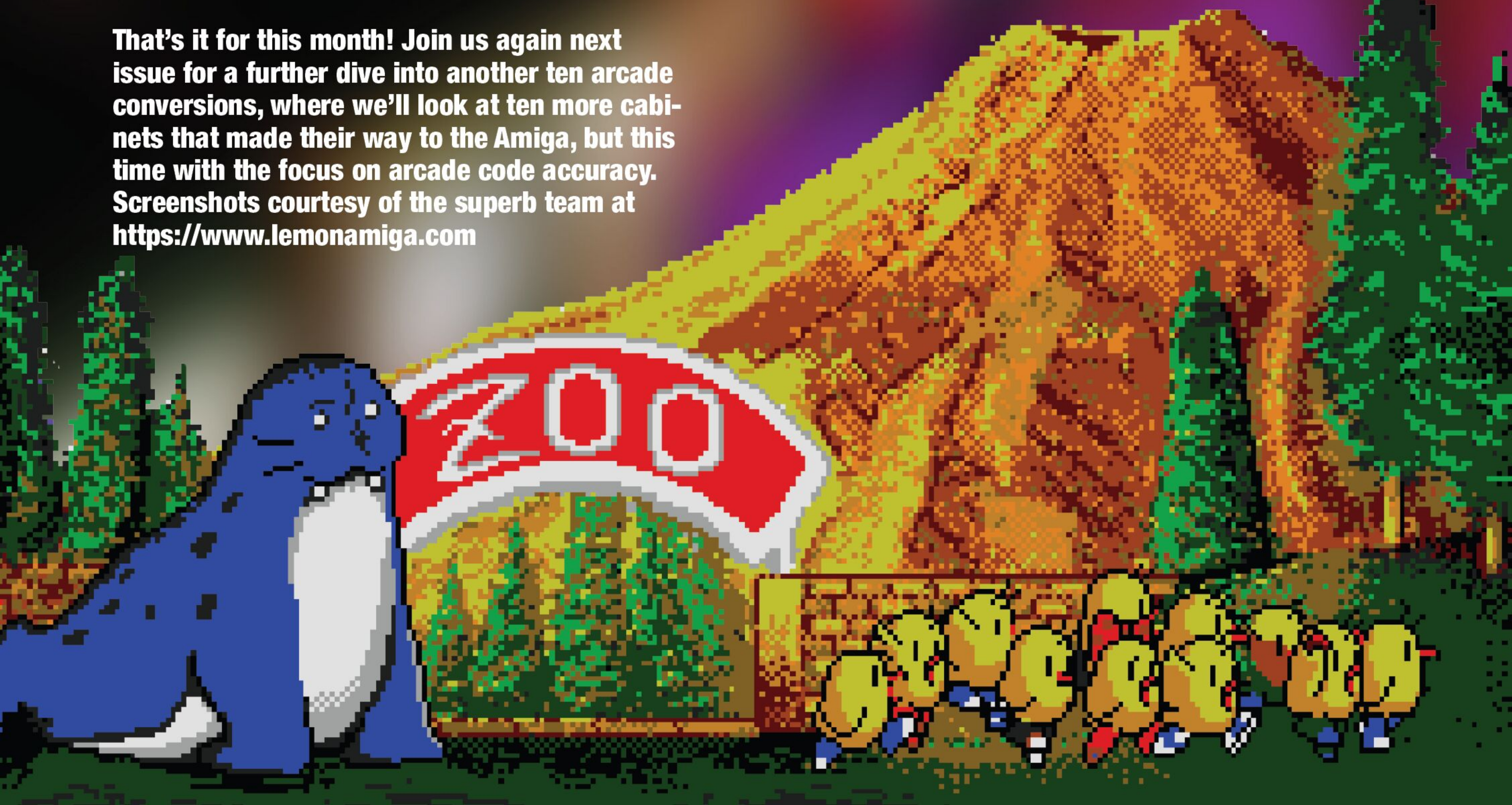


The graphics and music may be cute, but don't be fooled! This is one tough challenge. Tiki the Kiwi needs all the extra weapons he can get his wings on, since the attacking enemies emerge relentlessly - and many of them chase him, thanks to the various vehicles/ modes of flight he can then hijack. Level layouts are devious and filled with spikes, not to mention the water sections where our cute hero dons a snorkel and spits water at the surface. Your first go won't last long, but over time you will get further. Then you hit the boss sections, where learning their attacks and movement patterns is crucial. While I never got to the end and rescued all my fellow kiwis, it was such an enjoyable game I did not mind starting over when I died. This is definitely an impressive conversion for the Amiga, if you can handle the difficulty.



I adore *The New Zealand Story* more than I healthily should for a grown man with family commitments! A taxing game where you aid Tiki by rescuing his Kiwi friends from all manner of locations within each platforming level. While its initial cuteness may have you smiling, you'll be throwing the controller many times as you slowly increase your dexterity and nimbleness through the worlds taking enemies and bosses alike. ZZAP! issue #53 gave this a 93% Sizzler award, and it's not hard to see why. You really owe it to yourself to experience this at least once!

That's it for this month! Join us again next issue for a further dive into another ten arcade conversions, where we'll look at ten more cabinets that made their way to the Amiga, but this time with the focus on arcade code accuracy. Screenshots courtesy of the superb team at <https://www.lemonamiga.com>





Files LUCASFILM PRESENTS

ZAK MCKRACKEN

AND
**THE ALIEN
MINDBENDERS™**

Welcome to the next instalment of the ZZAP! Amiga Files, where we focus on one game, telling its story as revealed throughout the pages of the world's most fabulous Commodore magazine. From reviews to marketing, tips, and more, Graeme Mason delves into the files to discover everything we said about a particular game.

In this issue, he jumps into the crazy, bonkers world of Zak McKracken and his battle against the nefarious Alien Mindbenders.

CAN ONE HACK
SAVE THE WORLD FROM A GALACTIC CONSPIRACY? NOT WITHOUT YOUR HELP.

FRENCH BREAD

LUCASFILM
GAMES

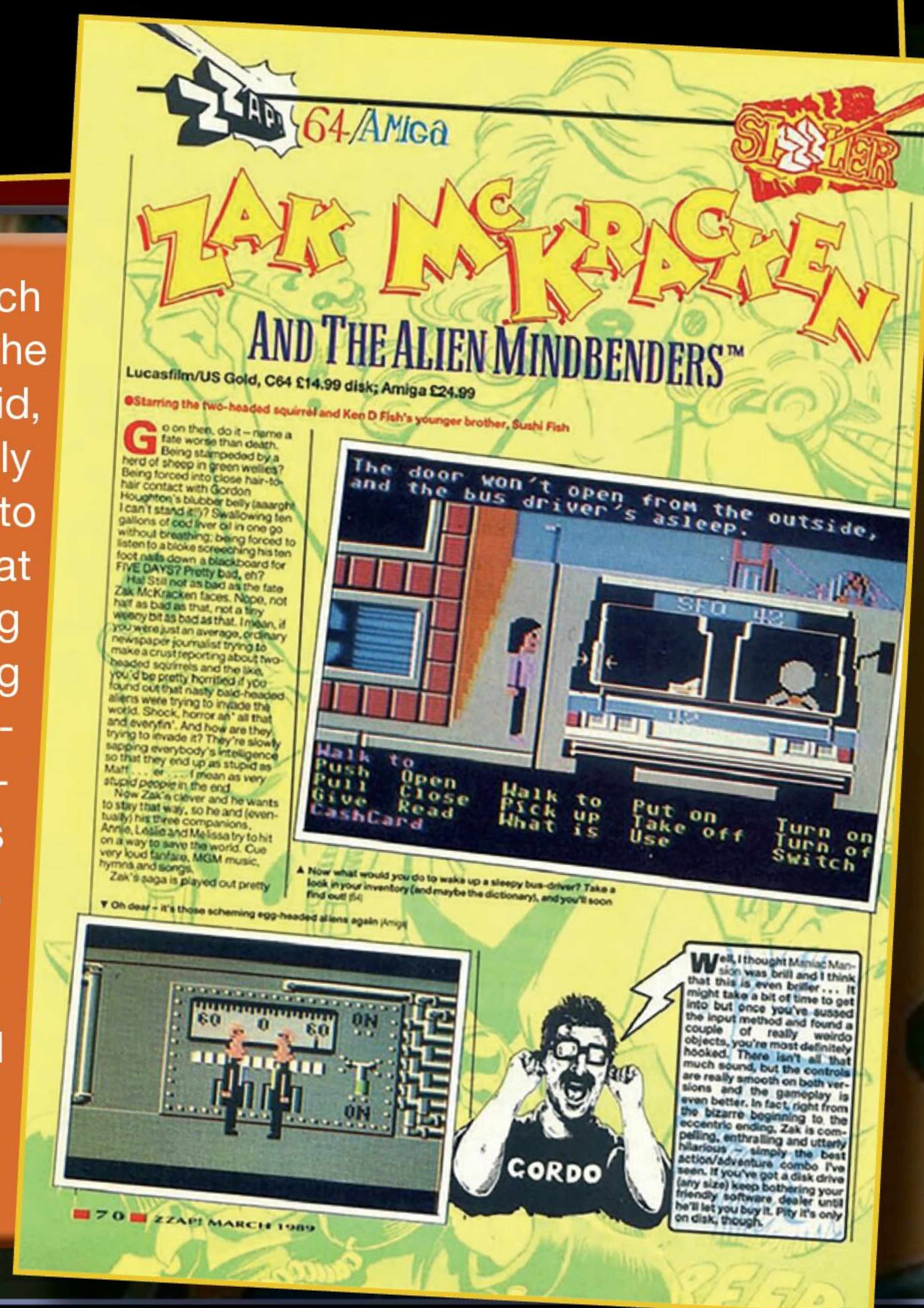
The Game

Following the success of its freshman SCUMM game, *Maniac Mansion*, LucasFilm released the madcap *Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders* in 1989. The game follows the eponymous journalist as he uncovers a plot by aliens, known as the Caponians, to reduce the intelligence of everyone on Earth by way of a 60 Hz hum emitted from their deadly mind-bending machine. Fortunately, another alien race, the Skolarians, devised a defence against the Caponians; unfortunately, the parts of this machine are scattered throughout Earth and beyond, forcing Zak and his colleagues to embark on a frantic chase across the world. Zak McKracken is a point 'n' click game and a middle ground between the text adventures of old and the genre's modern era. The player selects phrases from the list below the graphics window and guides Zak in his expansive quest, solving puzzles and negotiating complex mazes.



The Review

Zak McKracken duly arrived in issue 47 of ZZAP! in March 1987, and Gordon Houghton laid his cards straight on the table. "Well I thought *Maniac Mansion* was brill," he said, "and I think that this is even briller." While Gordon fully acknowledged the work players needed to do to get into the LucasFilm game, there was no doubt in his mind that it was worth the effort. "Right from the bizarre beginning to the eccentric ending, Zak is compelling, enthralling and utterly hilarious," he concluded, but would his fellow reviewers agree? Maff Evans, while loving the humour in Zak McKracken, drew copious comparisons between the C64 and Amiga versions before declaring, "Look, forget about all the differences – both versions are brilliant, and whichever machine you own, you'd be Zak McKrackers to miss it!" That last pun received a withering response from the editor, Gordon – how would the LucasFilm game do in the final scores?



The Verdict

Sound had the most disappointing outcome in our concluding verdict, notching a miserable 30%. While Zak McKracken's cartoonish graphics scored 70%, the gameplay truly won the ZZAP reviewers over, with 90% for Hookability and an impressive 97% for Lastability. The game's entertaining intro and wealth of options also ensured a healthy 94% for Presentation, leading to an overall score of 90% and Sizzler status for the LucasFilm adventure.

64	amiga	
94%	PRESENTATION	94%
Animated intro episode plus loads of user-friendly features like save game option, pause mode, bypass a cut scene option and message speed adjustment – woooh!		
74%	GRAPHICS	70%
The 64 version sports big and colourful sprites but the scrolling jerks a bit. More detail on the Amiga version – still not as much as you might expect.		
36%	SOUND	30%
Apart from the odd atmospheric sound effect, not much really.		
90%	HOOKABILITY	90%
Everything's immediately accessible and there's loads to explore.		
97%	LASTABILITY	97%
There's so much depth to this you just won't be able to stop yourself picking it up again and again and again.		
93%	OVERALL	90%
A real riot of an action/adventure game. Miss it and be really square.		

ZZAK! On The Cover

We were clearly highly enthused with the incoming LucasFilm game – issue 47's review was supported with this superb portmanteau cover from Oli Frey. *Rocket Ranger* and *LED Storm*'s crimson car keep Zak company as he juggles various items from the game. The presence of a goldfish, baguette, blinking broom, and Groucho Marx disguise was sure to intrigue readers as to quite what *Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders* was all about...



A Zak Compo

The role of that goldfish from Oli's cover inspired ZZAP's Zak McKracken competition in issue 47. It was left to Ken D. Fish [who else? – Ed], transplanting his usual mystery fish corner to the competition. "This is the most popular food fish in the world," teased Ken. "It has three dorsal fins and two anal fins and is a scavenger." Correctly identify the breed of fish, and you could be in with a chance of winning a giant fish tank and some fish to go in it! Twenty copies of *Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders* awaited the runners-up.



Zak McKracken And The Case Of The Missing Charts

As with last issue's *Silkworm*, Zak McKracken lost out due to the fluctuating fortunes of the ZZAP! Amiga charts. Dropped for 'space' reasons, when they finally re-appeared in issue 58, the LucasFilm game was long-forgotten by the readers. Booooo!

THE CHARTS

Yes, it's the return of the old favourite as we go into over-drive this month with not only the top 64 hits but Amiga and coin-op AND music charts as well.

One heck of a lot of games have come and gone since the last charts section in ZZAP! so it's time to update it all. To get things going up reviewers have banded together and, as 'democratically' as possible, we've put together a list of our fave-raves on the 64 and Amiga ('democratically' meaning the usual threats, bribes, pleading, and physical violence).

We see the welcome return of the charts for the best aural accompaniments on both machines and the mad 'Welshman' has demanded a coin-op chart which he's 'democratically' thrown in as well. So get voting for the all-new charts NOW, folks - you could win £20 worth of software! Don't delay, fill in that slip today and send it away!!

TOP 10 C64 GAMES

1. Turbo Out Run (J&S Gold)
2. Ghosts 'N' Goblins (Capcom/US Gold)
3. Space Invaders (Atari)
4. Batman: The Movie (MobyGames)
5. Myth (MobyGames)
6. Power Drift (Atari)
7. R-Type (Atari)
8. The Untouchables (Capcom/US Gold)
9. Operation Thunderbolt (Atari)
10. Starblaster 2 (Atari)

TOP 10 AMIGA GAMES

1. F-29 Retaliator (Ocean)
2. Operation Thunderbolt (Ocean)
3. Astro 2000 (Infogrames)
4. North and South (Ocean)
5. Batman: The Movie (Infogrames)
6. Kick Off (Infogrames)
7. Sim City (MobyGames)
8. Blood Money (Capcom/US Gold)
9. Strider (Atari)
10. Starblaster 2 (Atari)

C64 MUSIC

1. Ghosts 'N' Goblins (Tim Follis)
2. Turbo Out Run (Tim Follis)
3. The Untouchables (Tim Follis)
4. Batman: The Movie (Tim Follis)
5. Chameleon (Tim Follis)

AMIGA MUSIC

1. Double Dragon 2 (Tim Follis)
2. LEO Storm (Tim Follis)
3. Ghosts 'N' Goblins (Tim Follis)
4. Batman: The Movie (Tim Follis)
5. Xenon 2 (Tim Follis)

COIN-OPS

1. S.T.U.N. Runner (Atari)
2. Special Criminal Investigation (Atari)
3. Afterburner (Atari)
4. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Atari)
5. U.N. Squadron (Atari)

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

MY TOP THREE C64 GAMES ARE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

MY TOP THREE AMIGA GAMES ARE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

THE BEST C64 MUSIC IS

BY

THE BEST AMIGA MUSIC IS

BY

THE BEST COIN-OP IS

Once it's done, send it to ZZAP! CHARTS (15, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY5 1DA.

Compo Result

'Cod' was the obvious answer to Ken D. Fish's mystery fish in issue 47's Zak compo, and Robert Davies of Liverpool became the lucky recipient of the aquarium and fish. Twenty-five more readers (up from the 20 quoted in the competition) won a copy of the game.

ZAK MYSTERY FISH CORNER

Exactly my kind of game, this - but I sincerely hope that none of you switched on the lamp with the poor fishy in it... US Gold Flake were offering one of those

accoutrements and a copy of *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*. He/she/it was:

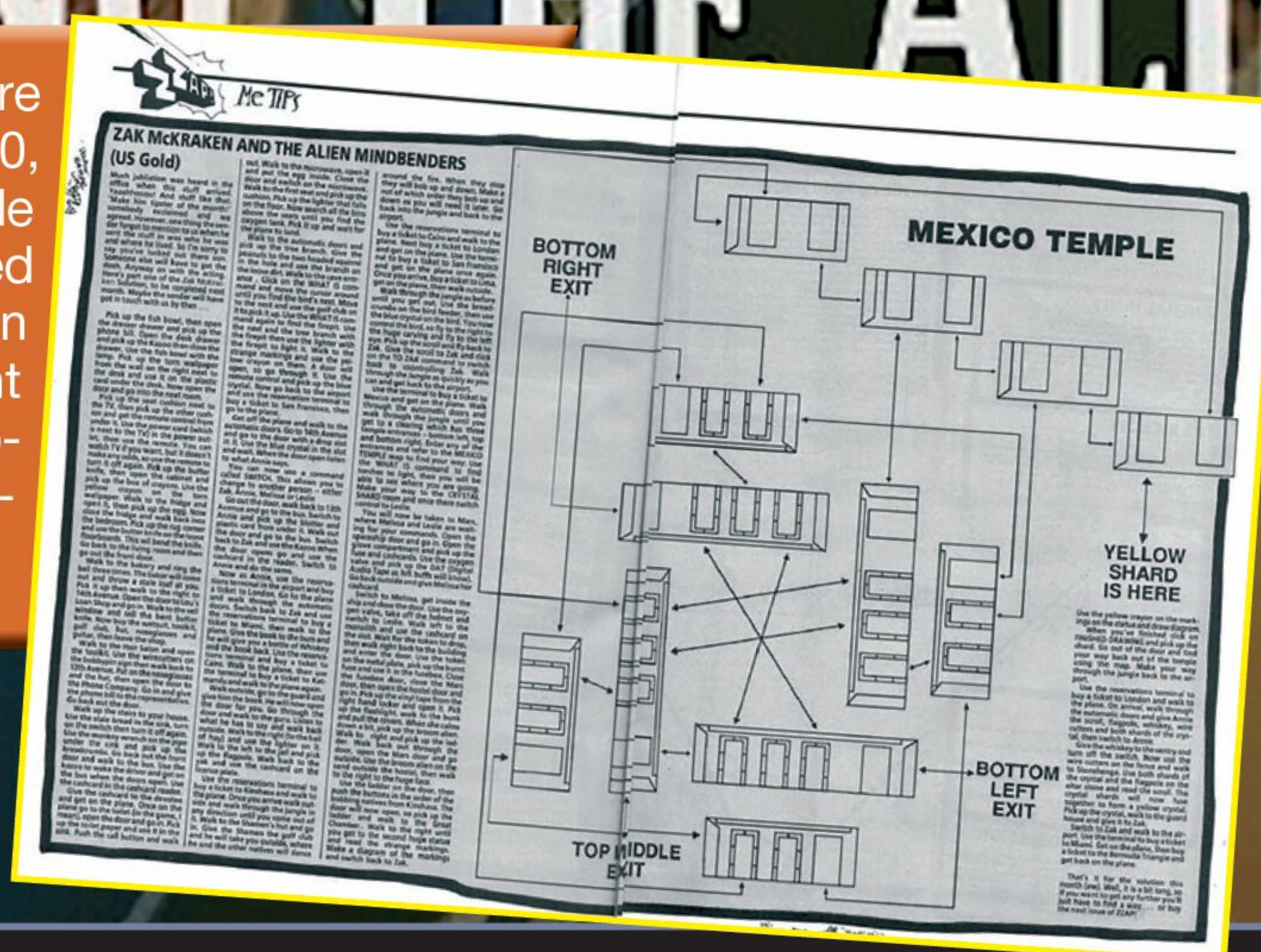
Robert Davies, LIVERPOOL L11

up received a copy of the game with my compliments. A fishy fin if you will,



Tips and More

Stuck on one of Zak McKracken's obscure puzzles? ZZAP! had the answer in issue 50, with as much of a solution as was possible within two pages. A useful map also showed players how to negotiate the tricky Mexican temple maze. Sadly, space restrictions meant the second part of the solution failed to appear - you were on your own from Miami onwards!



A Wacky Legacy

SPACE QUEST II

Sierra/Activision, Amiga £19.99



pace—the final frontier. I'm a big fan of *Star Trek*, me, so anything to do with space and all that goody stuff gets me really excited.

So—you remember *Space Quest*, don't you? Course you

do. That was the time you, humble 'brain the size of a peanut' interplanetary janitor, managed to save your planet Xenon (now, where have I heard that before?) from certain death by Vohaul's secret Star Generator. Wool! Vohaul sounds just like my kind of guy, actually. He's slimy, fat, purple (personally, I

prefer green) and really, really gross. And he's got a plan. Unless you manage to blitz him in time, Xenon's going to be invaded by thousands of genetically engineered life-insurance salesman synthetically designed to make the life of every single citizen a misery. Oh no!

Oh yeah. And if your skimmer hadn't crashed on the way to the labour camp Vohaul's picked out specially for you, you wouldn't be able to do anything at all about it. Luckily, if you're clever enough, you can make it through the planet Labion, back to Vohaul's asteroid fortress and try to STOP THE PLAN.

Action's presented in typical Sierra style. You wander around the 3D environment using your joystick and typing in commands (to pick up objects and so on) just as in a normal text input adventure.

According to the back of the box, the graphics are in 'incredible 3-D'. Erm... well—we all know what 3-D is like and this isn't it. You can walk

behind bushes and trees but they look more like a pile of spinach (yeuch—really hate the stuff) than a shrub. I know you can't have brilliant graphics if you want a decent amount of memory devoted to the gameplay but you don't need to have badly defined blobby sprites instead. You can see from Lucasfilm's Zak McKracken just how much detail you can cram into this type of game it takes just one look at *Blockland* to see Sierra haven't done as much.

Yeah, yeah but what about the game itself? Well, I suppose it's OK if you like dying a lot. As for me, I'd rather spend the afternoon with a couple of tons of billy-goat spare ribs in bar-B-Q sauce than spend an hour of so getting killed every time I find a new location. So what if you can save to disk! Looks to me like they just ran out of ideas for a more interesting storyline.

Personally, I didn't go a bundle on this one but if you liked *Space Quest*, you'll probably find something to enjoy in it. 3-D and movement

LucasFilm's excellent reputation for the adventure genre was already beginning to influence our reviewers, and this was never better demonstrated than in issue 49's review of Sierra's *Space Quest*. "I know you can't have brilliant graphics if you want a decent amount of memory devoted to the gameplay," noted Chuck Vomit, "but you don't need to have badly defined blobby sprites instead. You can see from LucasFilm's Zak McKracken just how much detail you can cram into this type of game." Evidently, everybody else needed to raise their game.

The Best Of The Eighties

With the world slipping out of the Eighties, ZZAP! celebrated the new decade by... celebrating the previous one. Each reviewer nominated their ten best games of the Eighties, and it was no surprise to see Zak McKracken appear in someone's Amiga picks. What was a surprise was that it was simulation and strategy fan Robin Hogg who nominated the LucasFilm classic.

ROBIN

amiga

F-16 COMBAT PILOT (Digital Integration)

Miles better than the over-hyped Falcon, F-16 Combat Pilot is a tricky beast to fly but persevere and you'll be rewarded with one strong challenge and massive depth to it all.

2. ATROX 5000 (Players)

Tron (the film) was fantastic and a Light Cycles game was the first game I ever played (on a dinosaur Beeb in my school's computer room). And I'm the Newsfield champ at it so it's got to go in!

3. F.O.F.T. (Grendin Graphics)

A mixed reception when this one came out but to my mind 16-bit Elite was vastly over-rated and F.O.F.T. wipes the floor with it.

4. FERRARI: FORMULA ONE (Electronic Arts)

I like my sims with lots of depth and you can't get much deeper than this one. Mastering the car handling is a task unto itself but throw in masses of options and you've got a cracking good game.

5. EMPIRE (Electronic Arts)

Not so hot in terms of depth or ideas but a charming little wargame to while away the hours with. Awful block graphics and some pretty dire sampled sounds but good fun.

6. ZAK MCKRACKEN (Lucasfilm/US Gold)

I'm not normally into adventures but Zak is one really funny game from start to finish. Everything about it is whacky, wild and dead good.

7. BATTLEHAWKS: 1942 (Lucasfilm/US Gold)

This Lucasfilm flight-combat sim has a realism all of its own and to my mind beats *Interceptor* hands down. Better than the WWII newsreels in fact.

8. SIM CITY (Infogrames)

A brand spanking new one but instantly a classic with all sorts of cities to dream up and fiddle about with.

9. NORTH AND SOUTH (Infogrames)

Very, very slick indeed with some hilarious touches. If any game could have knocked *Kick Off* off the top slot as the ZZAP! Office fave it had to be this one.

10. GYREX (The Power House (I think!))

Gyruss was a pretty potent coin-op for its time and has a quaint charm. This rip-off is immense fun to play.

Final Thoughts

Manic, crazy, and highly amusing, *Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders* was a breath of fresh air back in 1989. While more streamlined point 'n' clickers quickly usurped Zak, the fun never stopped in this zany adventure from the genre's masters, LucasFilm.





The

SCORPION

Segment

Scorpion is a fast and flexible game-making engine for the Commodore AMIGA computers. In this regular series, we get the latest news and thoughts from the creator, Erik Hogan, as well as insights from some of its most experienced developers.

Engine Tuning with Erik

I have fallen a little bit behind on the Scorpion schedule, which I usually try to coincide with the ZZAP! AMIGA publication.

With the current 2023.5 development cycle, there is only one major new feature - but it is a substantial one, that has brought new possibilities to games in development, such as a *BreakThru* port for Amiga and an unofficial *Kenseiden* sequel for Mega Drive.

In previous releases, each frame of animation could only have one “code event” attached and one “melee box” attached. Now, not only can you have unlimited amounts of each, but there are various other things you can do on each frame of animation:

Trigger multiple “code events” Previously, you would need to put all of your code for a frame into a single codeblock. Now, you could split this out into many different codeblocks

and combine as needed.

Trigger multiple “melee box” events

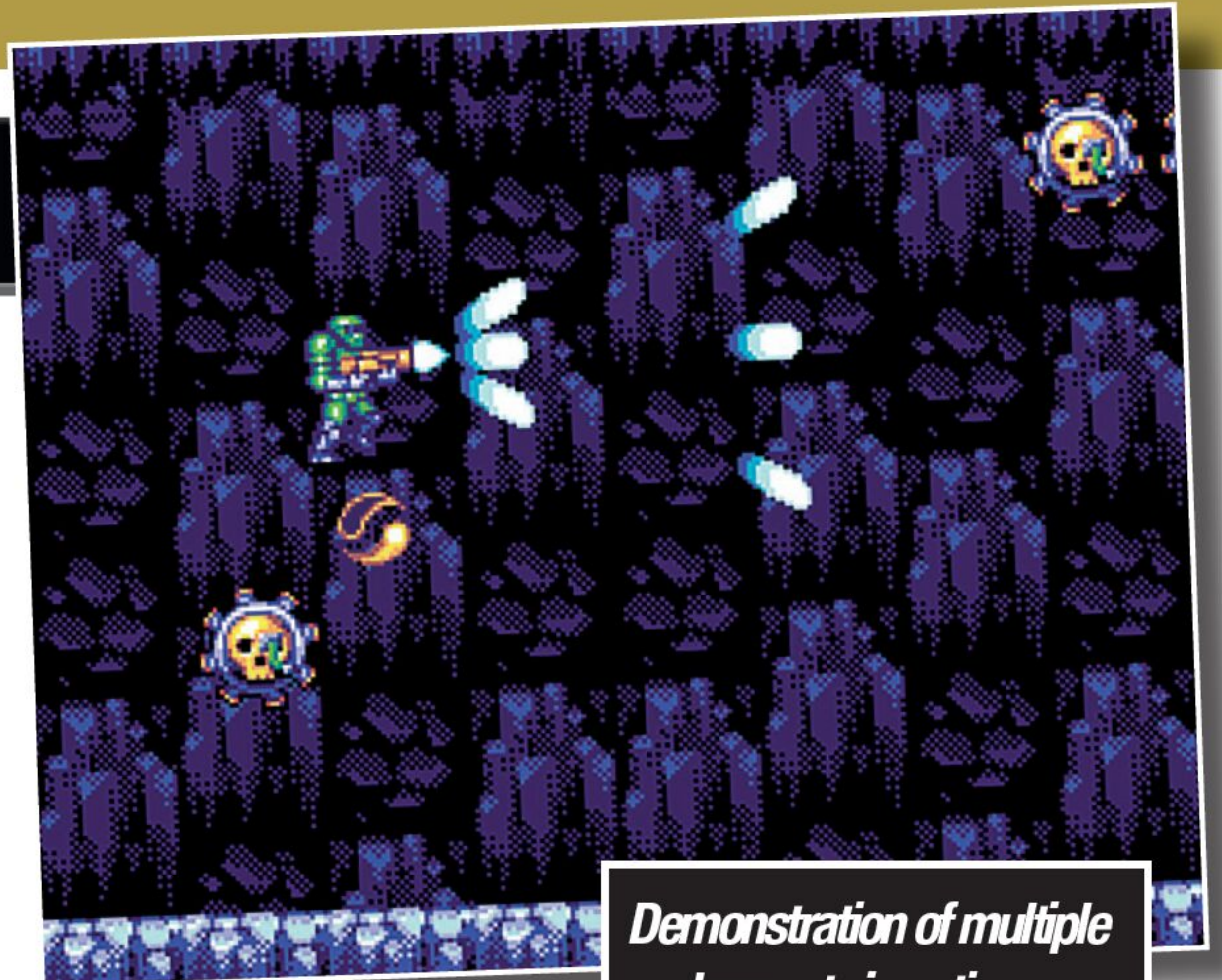
For a game like *Street Fighter*, a flying kick may require all of the feet and hands to be individually flagged as places that can hurt the opponent, rather than having a single collision box covering the entire frame.

Trigger multiple “spawn” events

For a game like *R-Type*, when you have collected powerups, you may wish to have multiple projectiles firing off in different directions.

Set the speed and direction of the actor

For a game like *1942*, you may want to have enemy planes that have a movement pattern



Demonstration of multiple code events in action.

where they loop around the screen. Now, you can manage that within the animation editor itself.

Being able to trigger a sound effect synchronised with the animation

This could even be exploited to create a basic song within the animation editor itself.

Finally, all of these animation events can be made conditional. As an example of this, if you have an upgraded weapon, you may wish to fire more projectiles at once, as well as play a different sound effect than normal.

Project Focus : Ninja

Where should I start? It all really began several years ago, when two friends of mine started selling new self-designed Mini ITX motherboards for the Amiga 500. You can find that project at enterlogic.se.

I helped out a little with some graphics, and we talked a bit about how it would be fun to have some new games that worked on the Amiga 500.

After a bit of research, we came to the conclusion that the Scorpion Engine seems to be by far the most interesting game engine for the Amiga today, so I downloaded the game engine and started playing around a bit in it to learn to understand how it works. It didn't take too long before I had a player character with all the animations it needs and a whole first level to run around in.

This little game grew a bit when I realized how easy it actually was to get started. The first time I put together my own code block, everything worked exactly as I wanted. It made the exit from the first lane visible when the player picked up an item I had placed at the end of the level. I was sure it would take me a while to get it working, but then and there, I realised how smooth the game engine really is. It is also very easy to edit maps imported from images and draw completely new maps in Tiled. I've used Tiled a lot at work, so I already know that program quite well.

I had some trouble getting the parallax layer to work until I found Scorpion Engine's Discord server. There, I got help very quickly to find what I had done wrong. The atmosphere on the server is that we're all there to learn and help each other, and that's something I really appreciate.

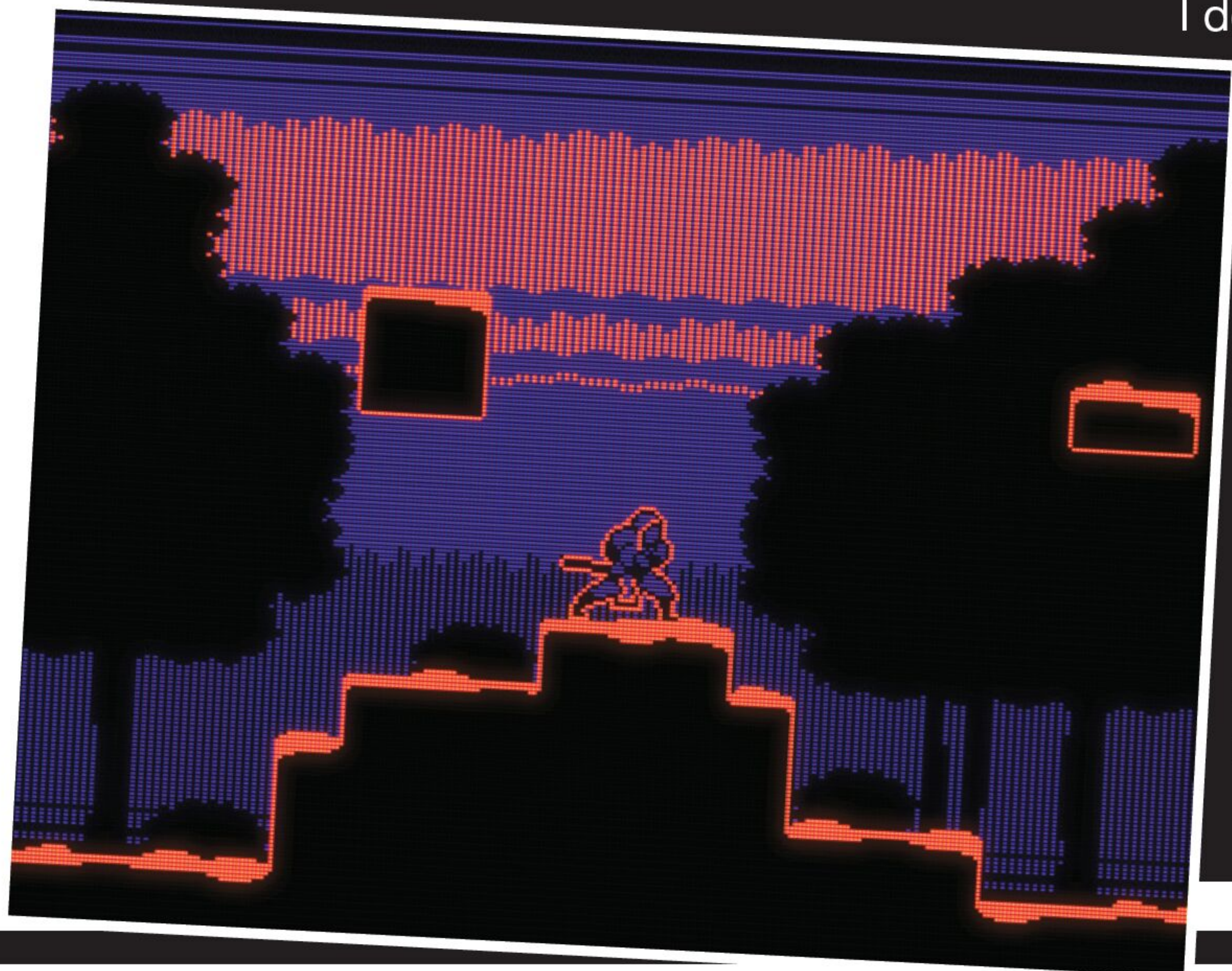
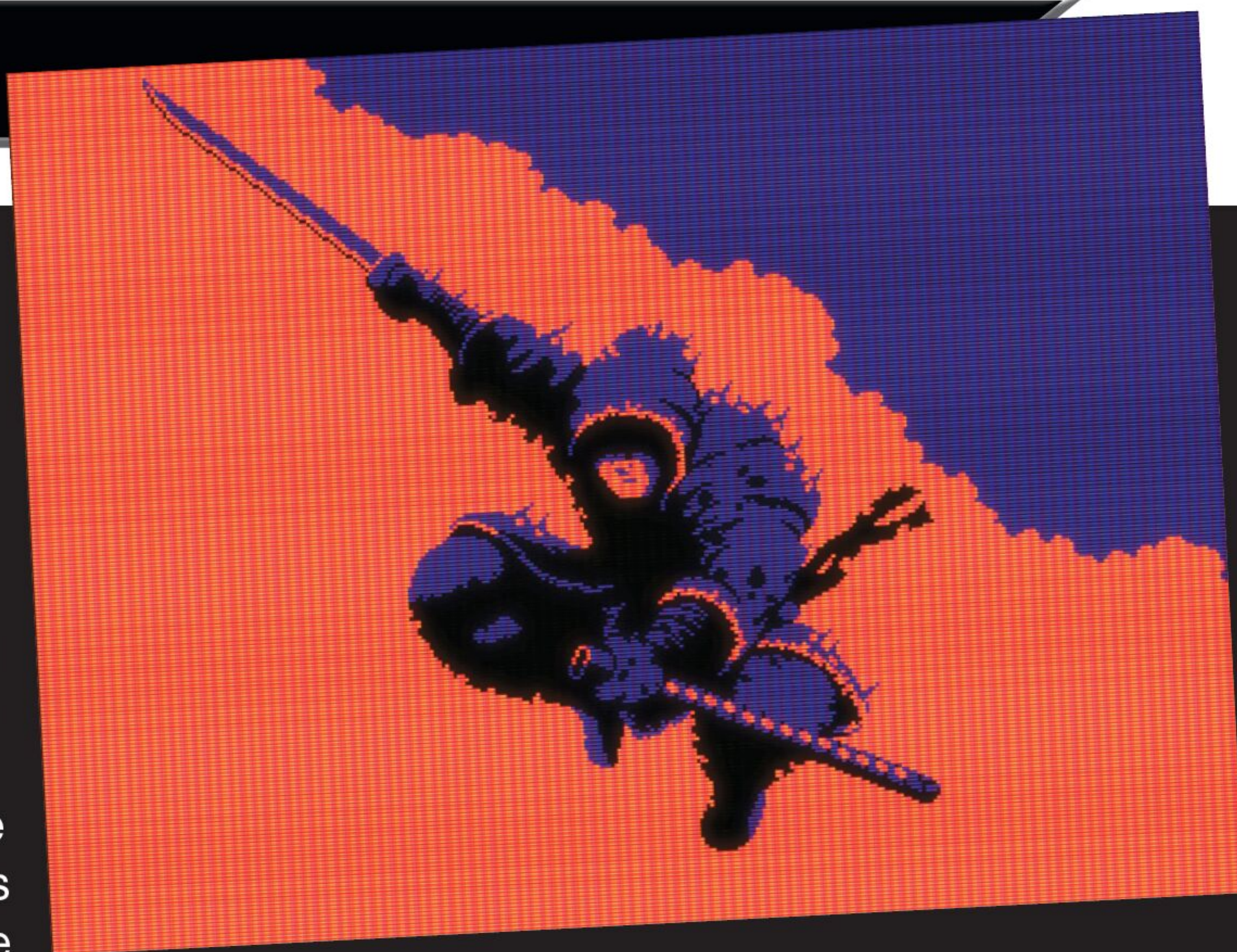
Today, the goal is for the game to contain 15 levels with unique tilesets, and between all the courses, the story is to be told with cutscenes consisting of between one to three images and some descriptive text. On a good day, I have time to put together a new tileset and a new map or draw a new picture.

I don't have much free time, but the development of the game is progressing steadily. Today, the first two courses are completely finished, and a lot of the images for all the cutscenes are also drawn.

To make the game stand out a bit, I chose to draw all the graphics with a very limited palette of only three colors plus transparency. I really hope it gives the game a unique feel when playing it.

The game still lacks any kind of music and sounds, but I'm working on that. I also need to find a name that feels right for it...

Andreas



Developer Diaries with Mixel

In this regular section, Mixel provides some deeper insights into some of the features of Scorpion, and how they are used in his projects. In this issue, he reveals how weapons are used in *Wizonk*.



CMO Update

Happy New Year everyone! I'm still off of *CMO:Hex Night* dev mostly, for the moment, but I have been tinkering to remove bugs and adding occasional new features. Adding 24bit copper gradients to the AGA build and taking advantage of new Scorpion features. I'm still mostly working on *Wizonk* though...

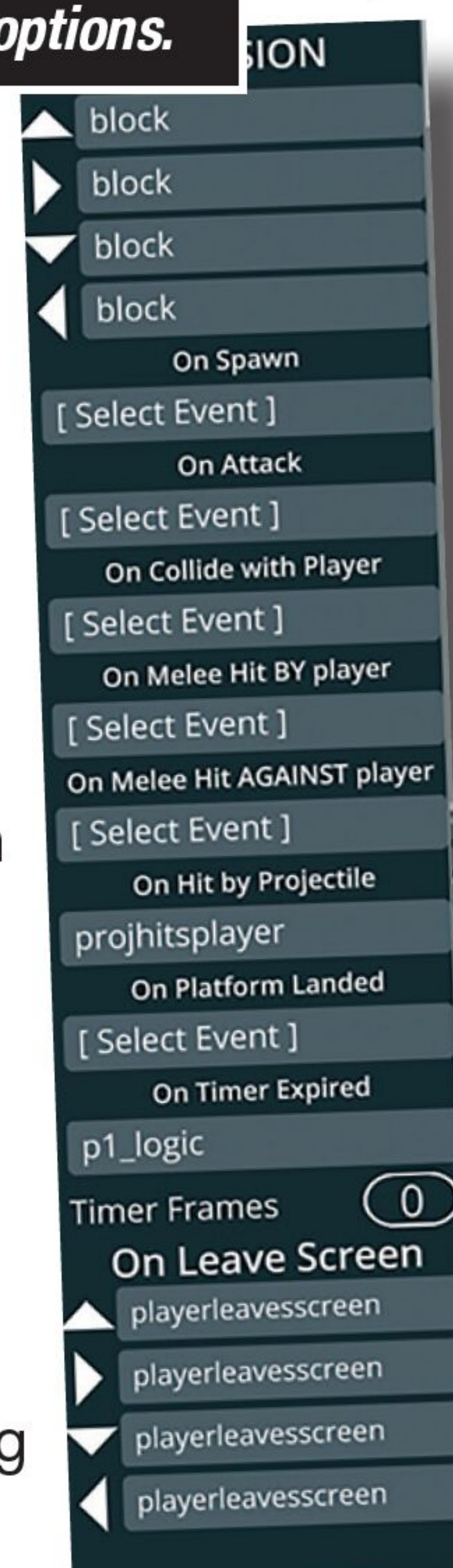
Wizonk Status

Working to a bit of a deadline (I'm hoping to have a playable build ready for Amiga Ireland in mid-January!), *Wizonk*

Scorpion's actor tab options.

dev is moving very quickly. I've added a bunch more stages, improved the graphics, and am steadily adding all the weapons. I'm in the final push!

Player 2 (the green witch, below) has been turned into a frog! Random weapons spawn on the map. This is one of my favourite arenas as it has a looping hole in the centre, so you can drop through the ceiling from there, but also painful fire-pits to the sides.



The 4 "On Leave Screen" boxes at the bottom right of the Actor tab allow you to link behaviour to a codeblock. The screengrab on the left is from Player1 (wizard)'s screen. In this case, the "playerleavesscreen" code (see right) checks my variable for whether a level edge should hurt (and rebound) the player or loop around, and if it had to loop around, it teleports the actor

to the other side (Move Actor X/Y is specified in map coordinates in pixels.) That's not particularly exciting to look at, but it leads to some fun chaos in-game, particularly when you can shoot projectiles between sides of the screen!

More Weapons

The screenshot to the right shows the cleric getting exploded by a bomb. For the bombs, I have the fuse length

Wizonk is coming along nicely.



Tiling blocks in Wizonk.

```

1  If levelfallloop == 0 then..
2      Gosub -> playerhurt3 then continue from here
3      If actor_y > 100 then..
4          Gosub -> hurtbylevelbound then continue from here
5          Set Actor yspeed to -5, scale 1
6      Else
7          Set Actor yspeed to 2, scale 1
8      End condition
9  End condition
10 If levelfallloop == 1 then..
11     If actor_y > 192 then..
12         Move Actor Y:3
13     End condition
14     If actor_x > 270 then..
15         Move Actor X:16
16     End condition
17     If actor_x < 16 then..
18         Move Actor X:270
19     End condition
20 End condition

```

sensitive to how long you hold down fire. There's another bomb bouncing around below the wizard, so he's quite likely to be hit by shrapnel from that.

But so far, my favourite weapon is the boulder. Here they are in action in a level with enemy slimes. They hurt the target more based on how fast they're moving. But they also work as platforms; if you're

clever about it, you can ride them into battle! Here's a picture of the boulder's actor tab.

In the preview window notice, "Projectile", "Moving Platform", and "Can Ride Platforms" are ticked, they're really important - projectiles can hit into normal actors (see "On Collide

stand on the boulder. Earlier in development, I had the players functioning as platforms too, so you could all stand on top of each other, which was really fun but led to too many situations where you can't hit each other!) Also, notice the negative Acceleration values. These ensure it steadily slows down after spawning.

Two more recent

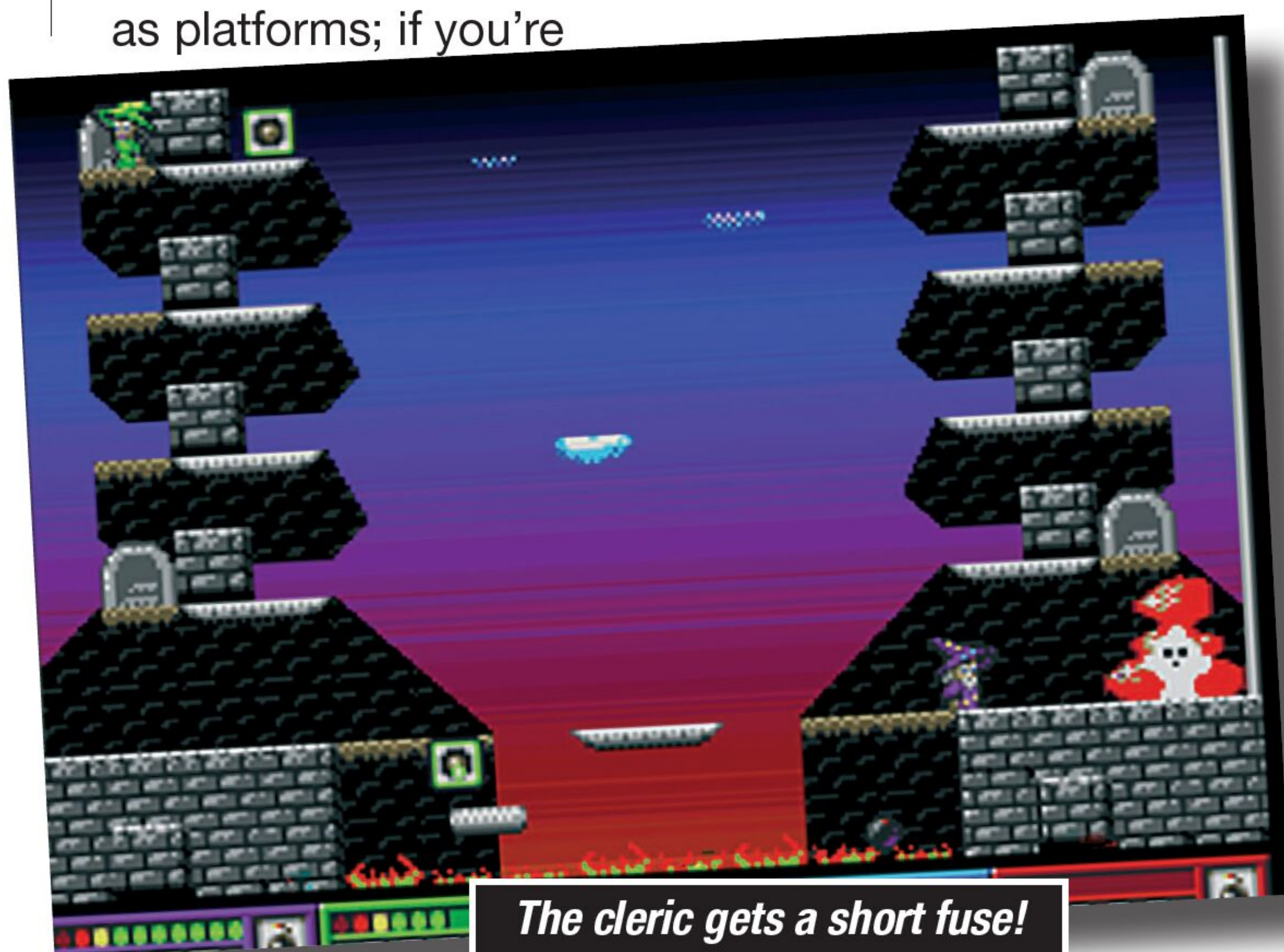


Working on the boulder weapon.

with player" and "On Hit By Projectile" at the centre right of the actor screen), and "moving platform" allows you to

developments... I've added so much stuff to the start/settings screen that it's almost getting out of hand.

Now you can choose start weapons per player, whether a weapon is excluded from the game entirely (to enable custom matches - personal favourite being frog curse only mode.). Added the ability to switch between 3 speed/performance settings, choose between various background copper themes and set handicap settings per player, so one player can have different health to the



The cleric gets a short fuse!

others. Most importantly, you can save every single one of the settings to disk with the floppy icon in the bottom left.. This also saves the current scores, so you could have a tournament or friendly ongoing competition that lasts multiple sessions!

Saving and loading from disk in Scorpion is easy and just the case of creating some custom variables and passing whatever you want saved into those in a codeblock.

This is just a tiny section of the save routine. The Load codeblock is essentially the opposite, copying the variables the other direction (My save codeblock currently saves 42 variables, and is only likely to increase!).

The last, silly recent development is...

I got Wizonk running on my CD32! I'm not sure what the point of this is, as I can't plug a 4-player

joystick adapter into it. But it was a good experiment and will be useful information for CMO's development.

Scorpion Improvements

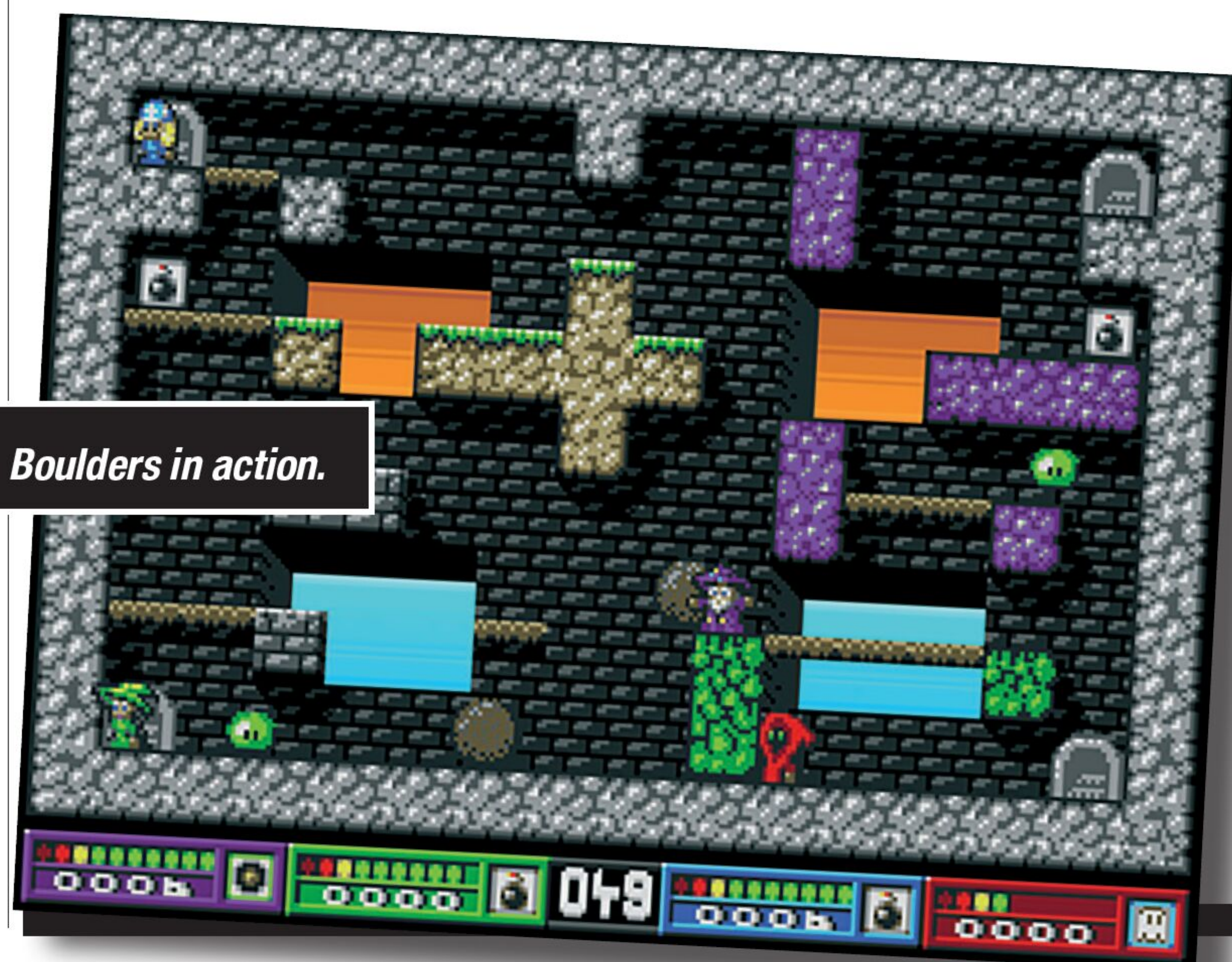
Scorpion's experimental branch has a ton of new features that will make things easier, particularly for big projects like CMO. You can now trigger events or sound effects on any given frame of an



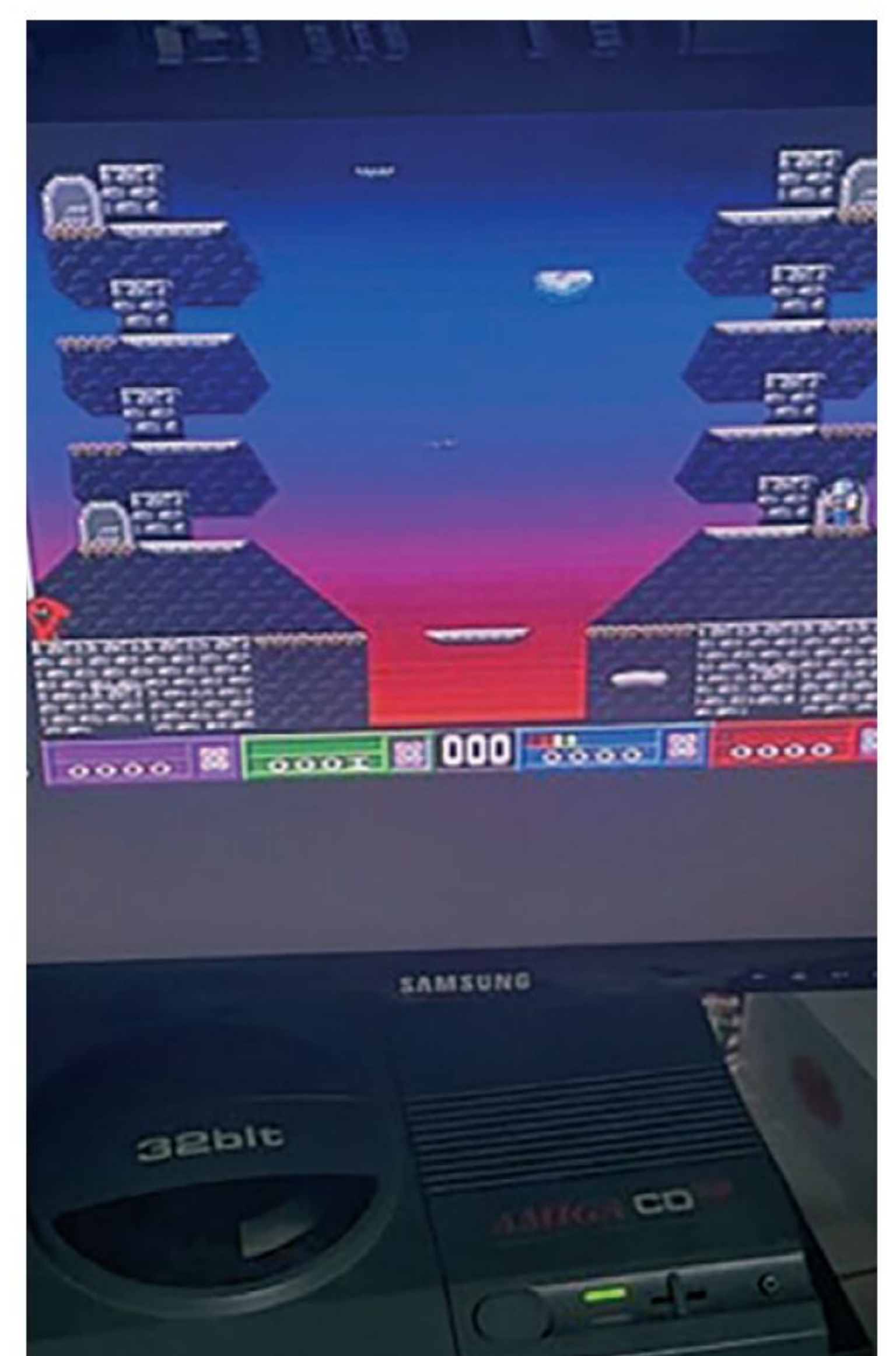
Wizonk options menu. Someone's after 100% for presentation!

actor's animation.. Little improvements like this make it so much more streamlined. There's also a new experimental feature allowing you to type in commands rather than use the pull down menus, which, for certain types of command, will save a lot of time.

See you next time when I'll hopefully have finished this run on Wizonk and be back to CMO!



Boulders in action.



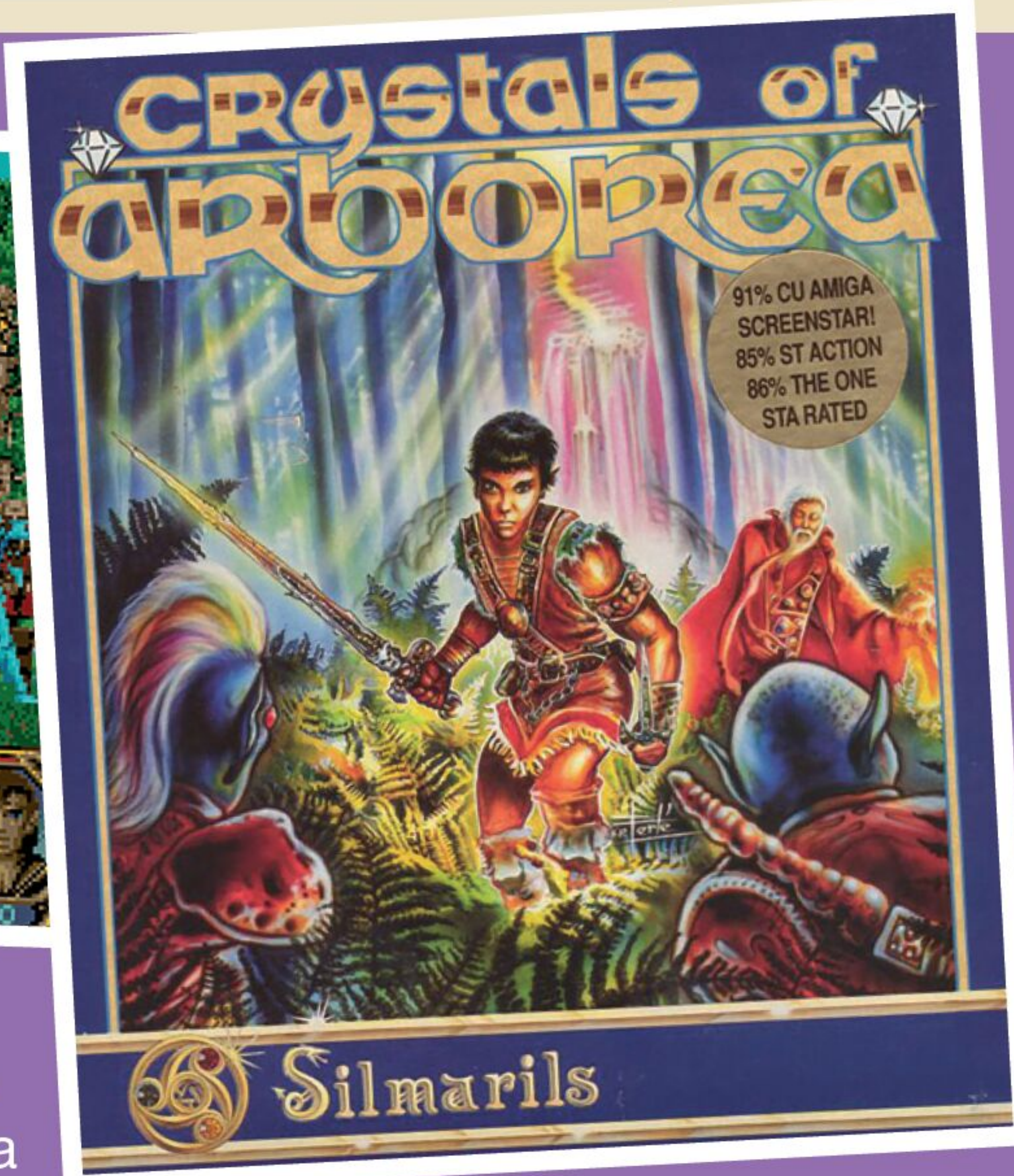
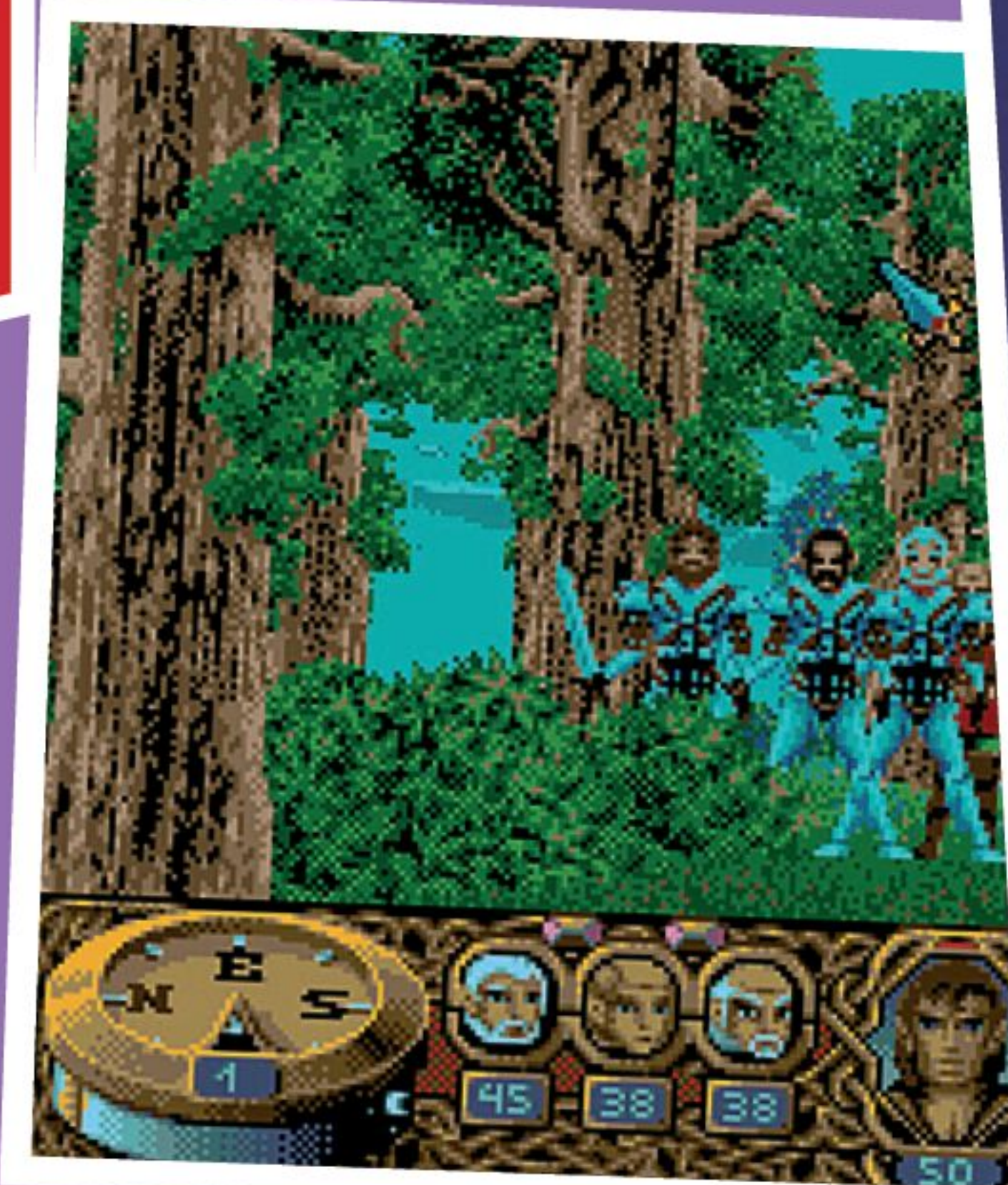
Wizonk running on a CD32! Achievement unlocked.

The best game inlay covers of 1990

There's been some stunning artwork gracing the covers of Amiga games over the years from various talented artists and photographers. Graeme Mason looks at some of his favourites as we travel back once more to 1990.

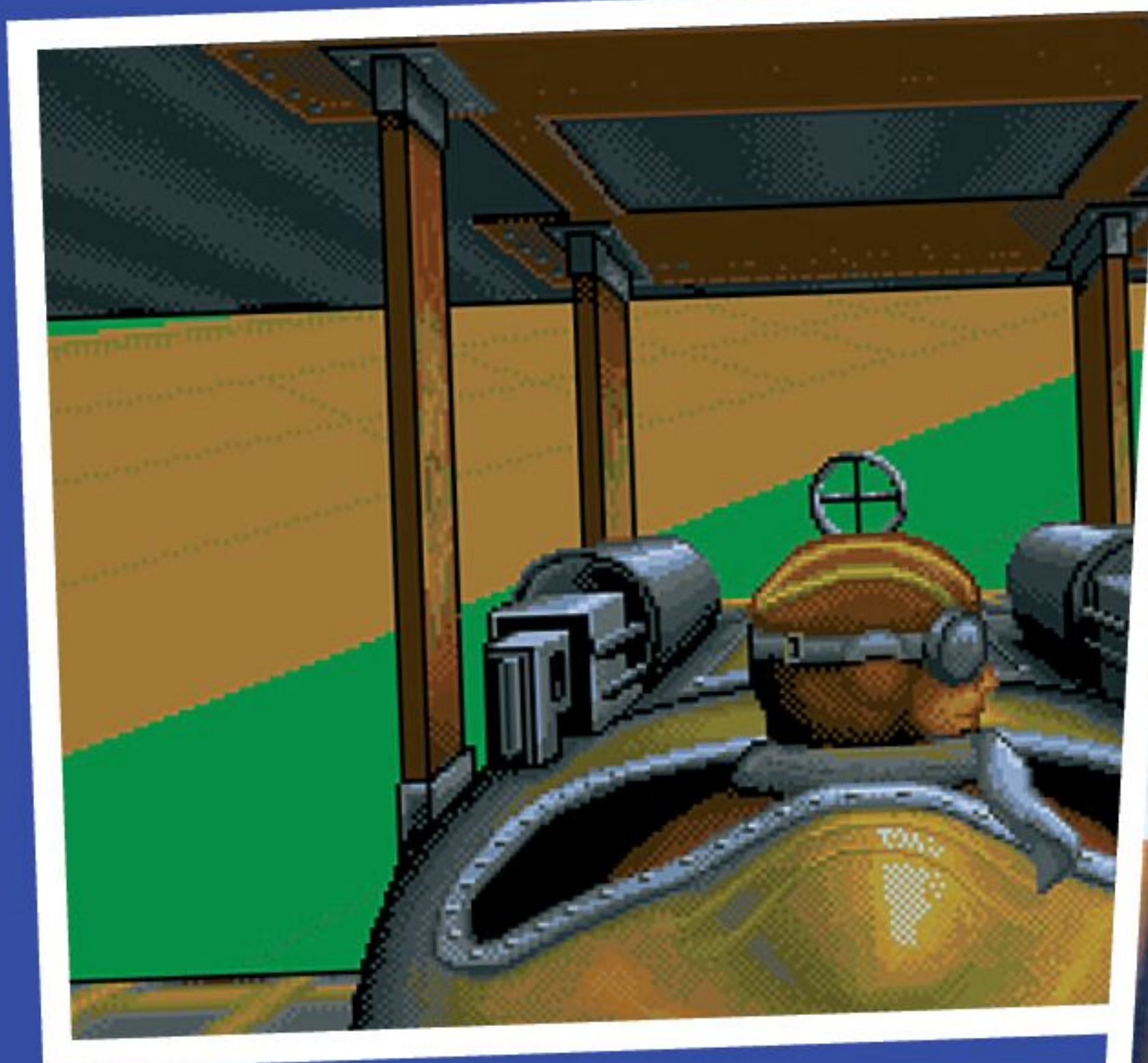
Crystals Of Arborea Silmarils

OK, I admit it: I'm a sucker for a sun-dappled forest. Chances are, if your cover has a bunch of trees with incandescent beams of sunlight piercing through, you'll get into this section. Now that we've got that admission out of the way, let's look at the rest of the lovely cover from this precursor to the Ishar series of RPGs. In Crystals Of Arborea, the player controls a party of up to six adventurers battling to save the land from an evil deity. Two of these are represented on the cover: a white-bearded old wizard lurks in the background, and a pointy-eared elf stands ready for battle. A brace of orcish figures confront the elf; on the surface, it doesn't look like a fair match. Yet the look of determination on the hero's face – brilliantly portrayed by the artist – in addition to his long and craggy sword, suggest he's about to make short work of the pair.



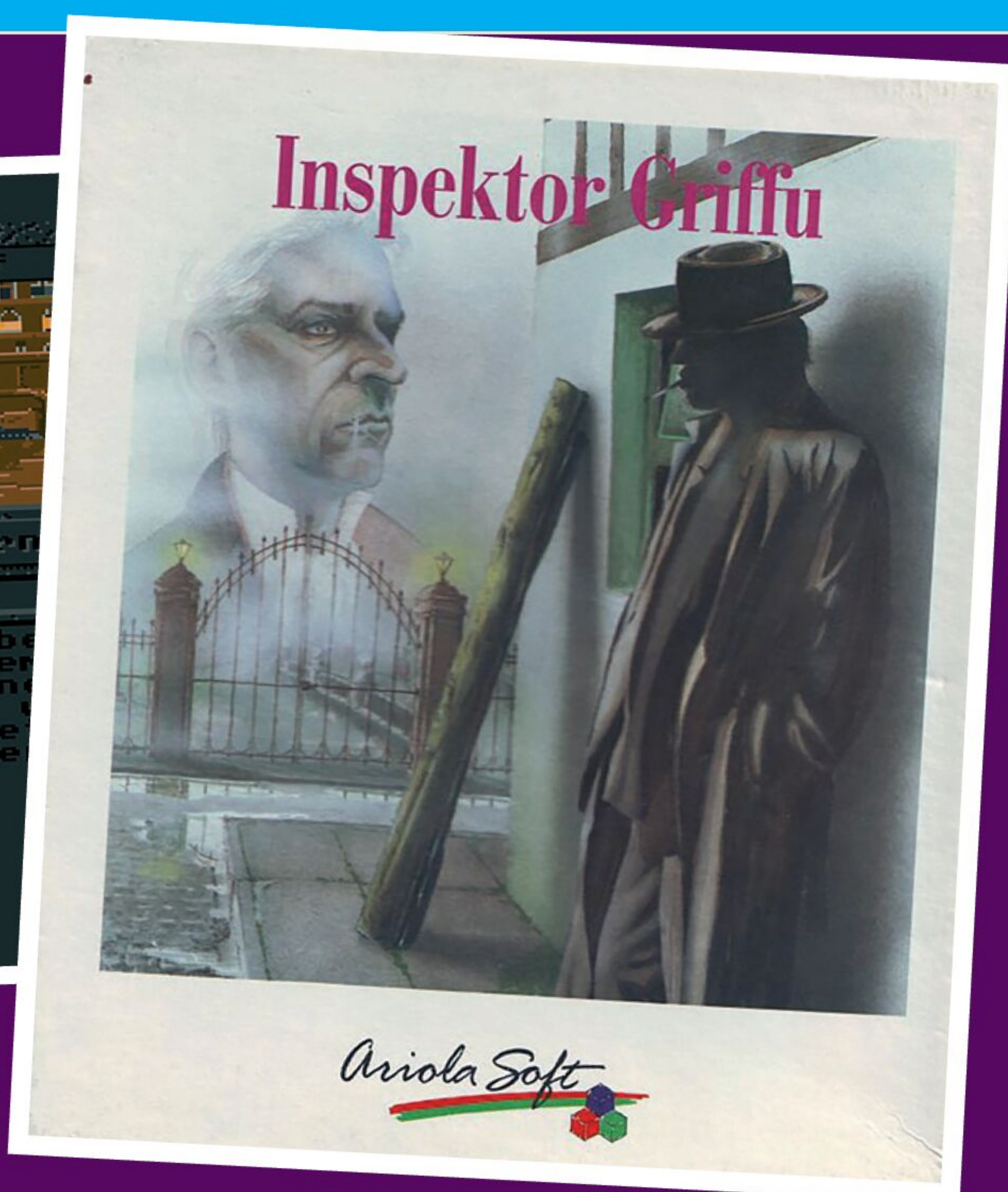
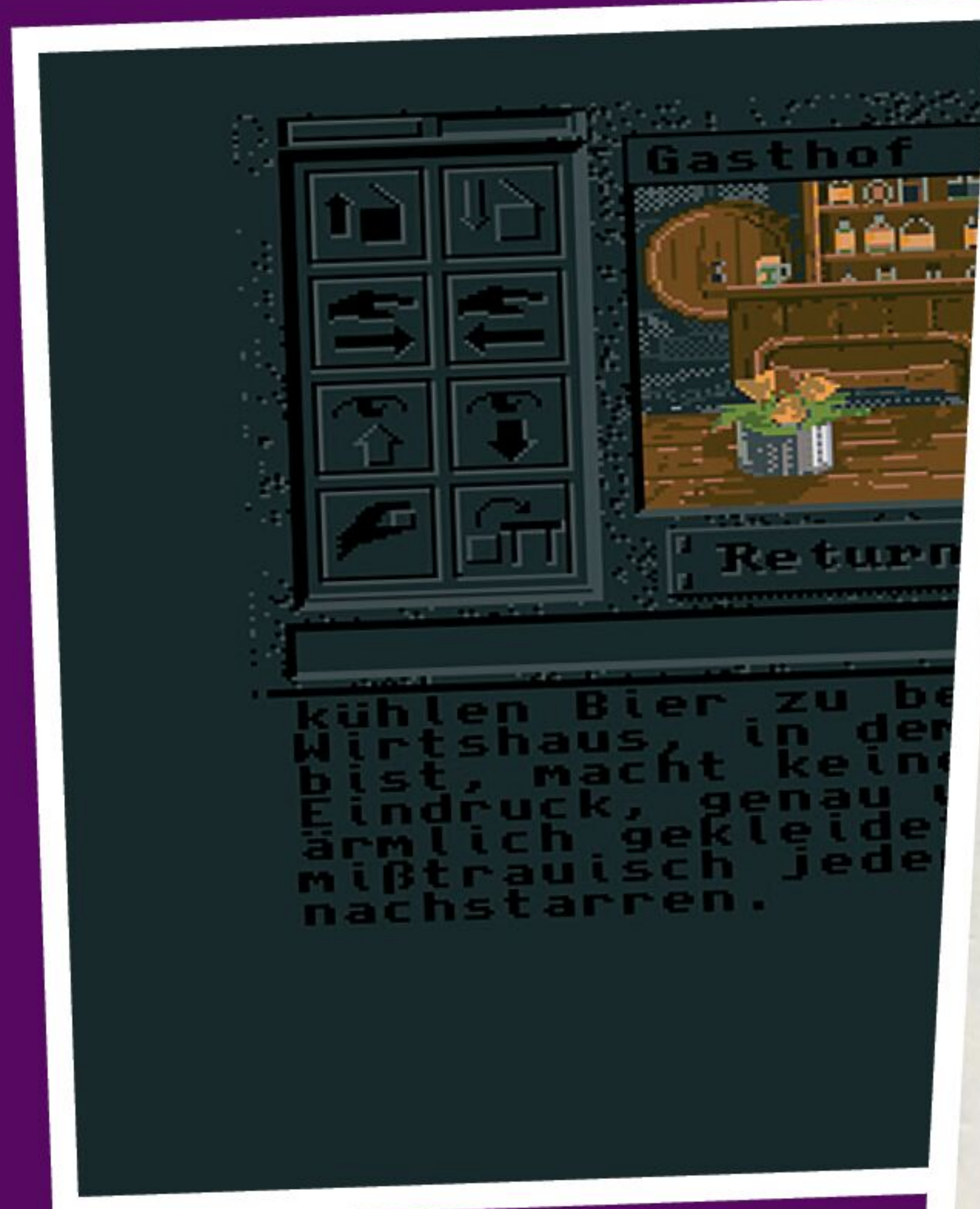
Wings Cinemaware

Cinemaware was well established by 1990, and this WW1 flight simulation is another beautifully presented game for the Amiga. I'm not sure aerial combat during the First World War was quite as dramatic as portrayed on the cover of Wings, but who cares? After all, the box's purpose is to sell the game, and the more excitement an artist can pack into a picture, the better, at least with an air combat game such as this. The image is dominated by a grim-faced Allied pilot, his left eye bearing through the plane's iron sights as he hunts down another German enemy. I love the pitched battle behind; two planes charge out of the sun while what looks like the Red Baron tails away to the right, having taken a hit to the wing. Explosions resonate throughout the appropriately crimson sky, and if this doesn't make you want to jump into a wobbly biplane deathtrap, then I don't know what will.



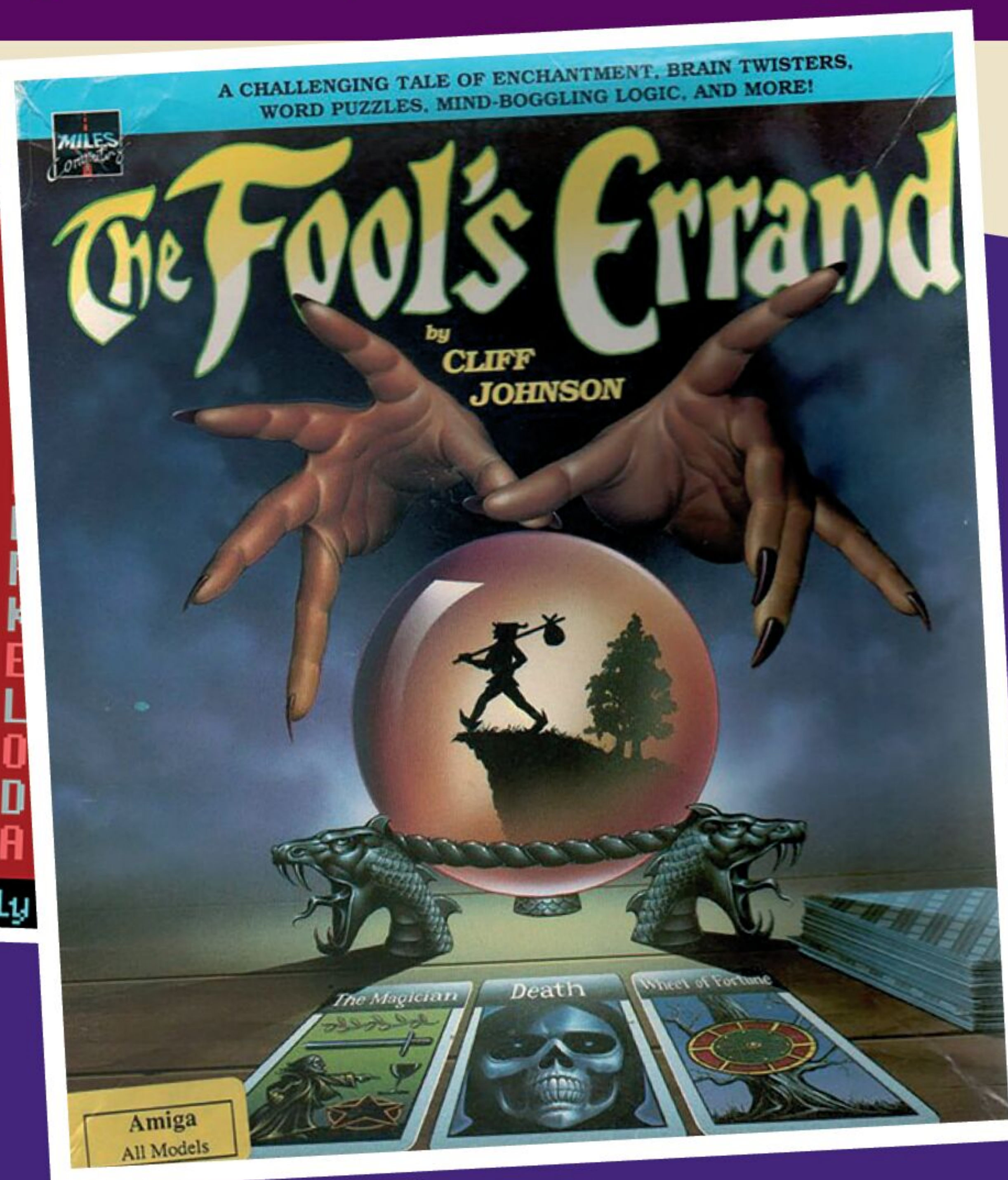
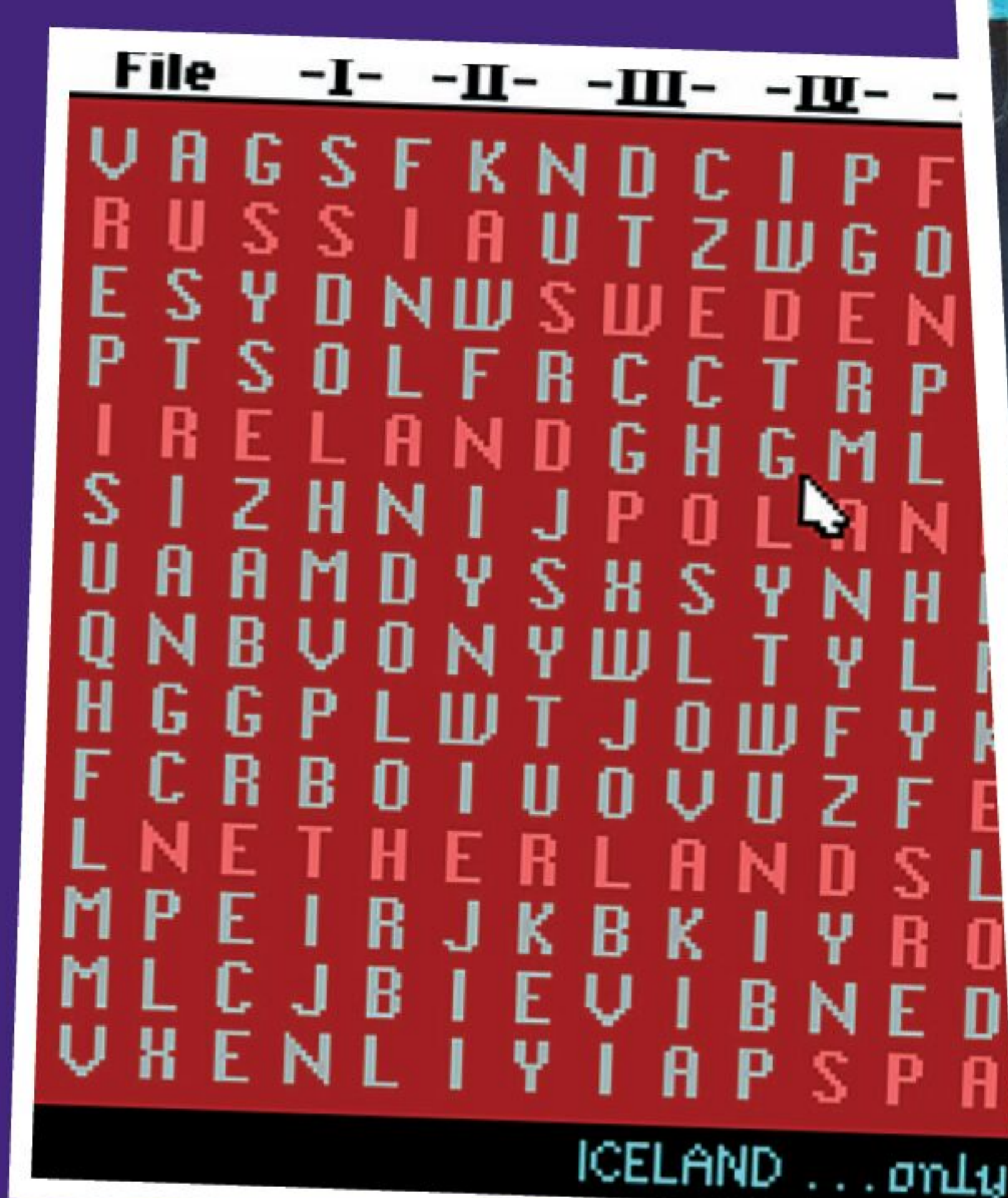
Inspektor Griffu Ariolasoft

It's time for a change of tone with this text adventure/point 'n' click hybrid from German publisher Ariolasoft. Inspektor Griffu is one of Germany's top detectives and a big pair of shoes for the player to fill. But fill them they must, because there's been a murder (it's not Taggart – Ed)! Griffu has one day to solve the mystery, interrogating suspects and searching for clues. There's a solid gumshoe theme to the cover, with the inspector leaning against a wall, nonchalantly puffing away while studying the scene before him. A ghostly apparition hovers over a graveyard, presumably the murdered man. Enigmatic mists swirl around the figure, and I particularly admire the blotchy puddles that neatly reflect the wrought-iron gates. Overall, it's a wonderfully rendered piece, full of skill and mystery – not least, what's the purpose of that long wooden sleeper?



The Fool's Errand Miles Computing

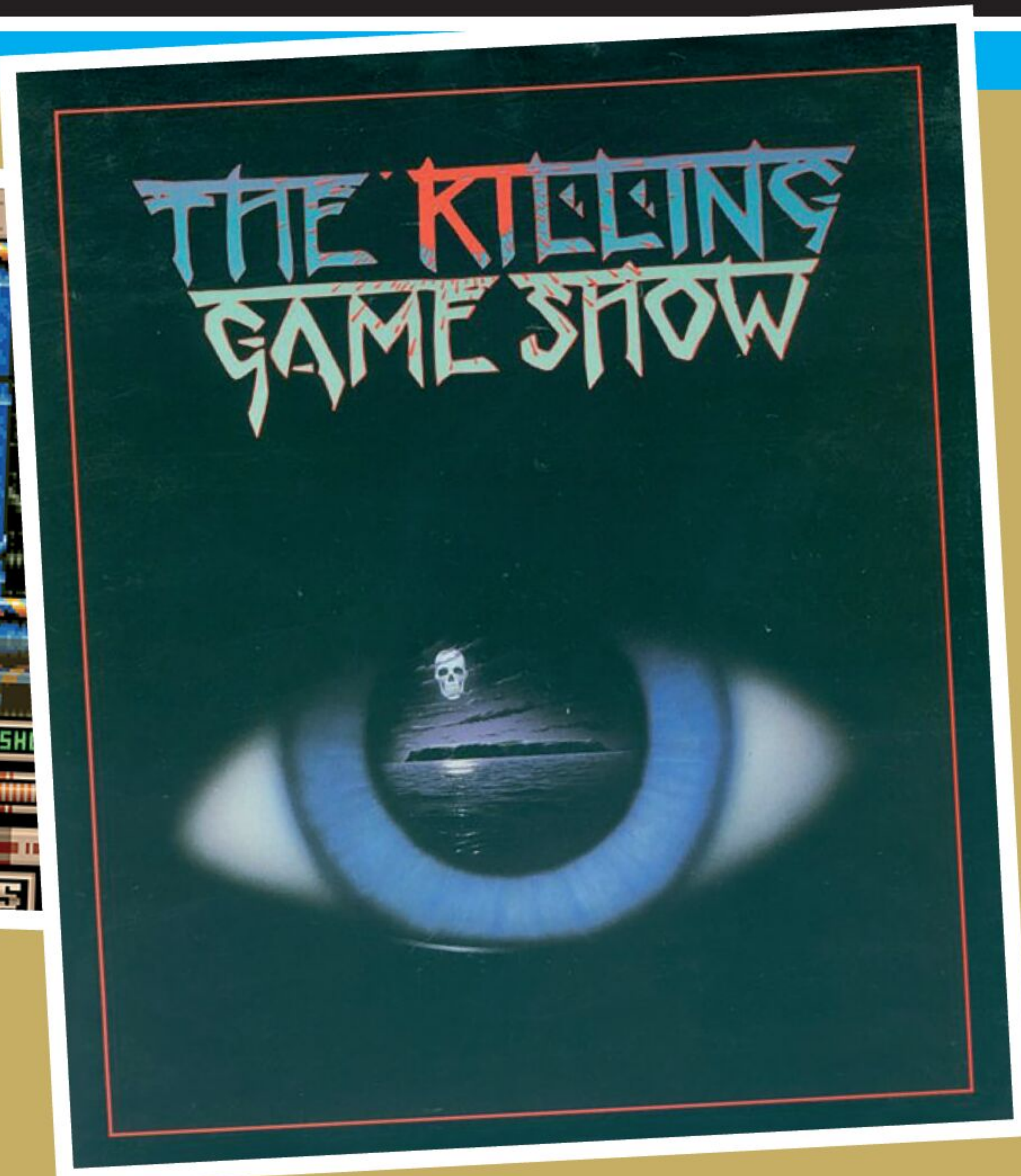
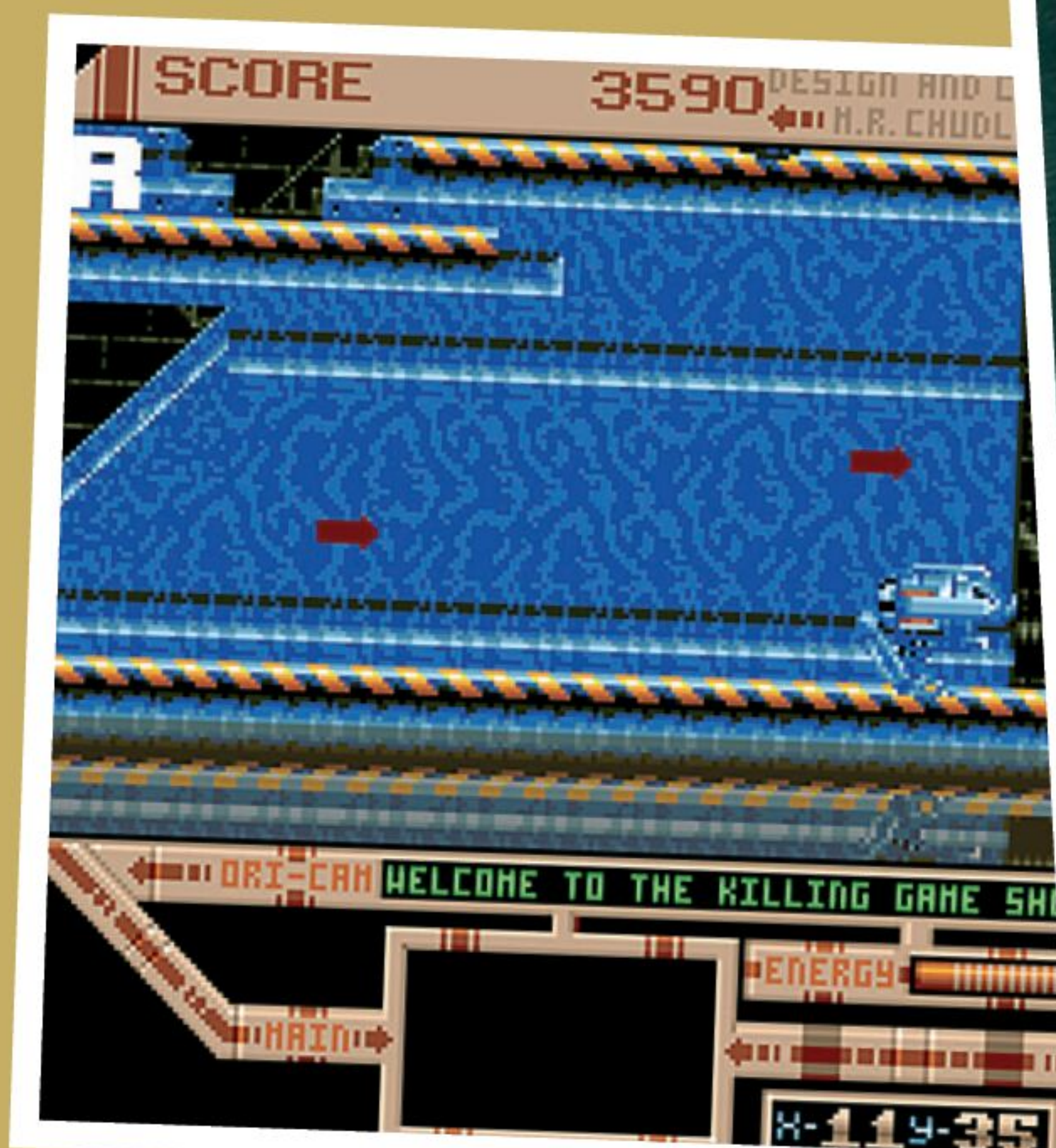
The Fool's Errand is a somewhat unique multi-layered experience consisting of several diverse types of puzzle. Word conundrums and shape-based challenges form much of the game, with the player taking the title role and solving the various puzzles to discover treasure and defeat evil. Its cover depicts a fortune-teller's globe, and the fool of the title about to, well, foolishly stride off a cliff. The globe rests on an ornate plinth while a pair of slender hands gesture above. A set of tarot cards (which the player encounters at the start of the game as part of its copy protection) sits beneath, and surprisingly, the fool card is absent. Death is there, however, a gloriously macabre skull, complete with eerie dotted eyes. Suitably moody mists swirl behind the scene, and at least the mysterious lady whose hands hover over the globe has had her nails done. They look really nice.



The Killing Game Show Psygnosis

So far this month, the covers have generally been busy affairs, whether depicting WW1-era biplanes or combat-ready adventurers.

This Psygnosis game, developed by Raising Hell Software, changes that as we shift focus to a less-is-more style. As its name suggests, The Killing Game Show is a Running Man-style futuristic TV competition for the entertainment of the masses. As a convicted criminal, you've been transplanted into a robotic body and jump up through each platformed level, avoiding enemies and the fast-rising deadly liquid below. The cover is stunningly understated: a gloomy island sits in the middle of the image, long and foreboding clouds suggesting it's a cold and windswept rock. The moon, cunningly re-imagined as a glowing skull, floats above, its reflection swimming across the dark waters. Best of all, this is all reflected in an alert eye, perfectly echoing the lurid dystopian theme of The Killing Game Show.

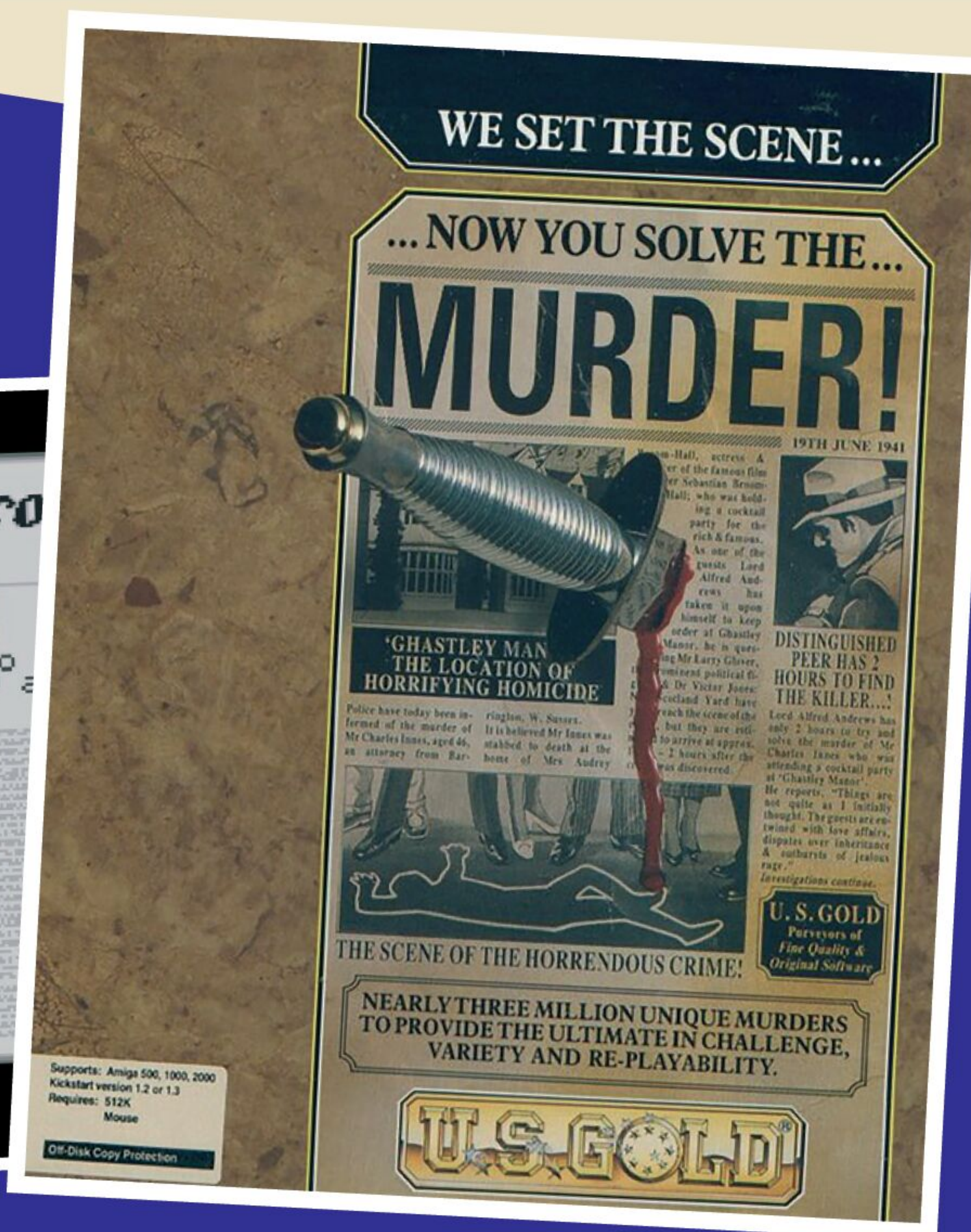
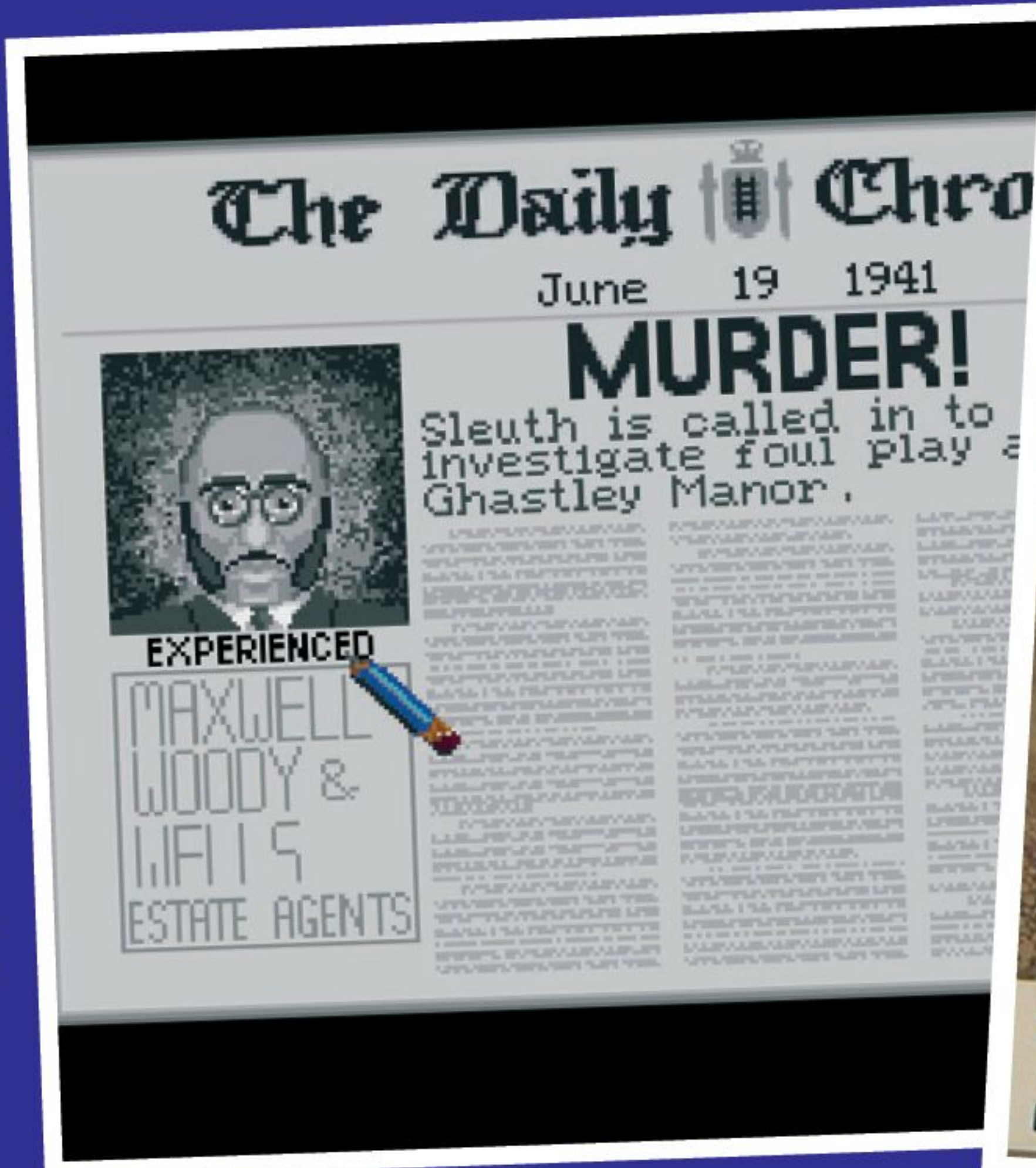


Murder! US Gold

There's been a murder (it's still not Taggart! – Ed)! Yes, it's murder mystery time again, with a game similar to

Inspektor Griffu, albeit one with a very different cover. Here, publisher US Gold went newspaper style: hardly original, I know, but still fun. The date is 19th June 1941, and Murder!'s vast range of procedurally generated crimes and plots is a sophisticated step up from its peers.

A chalked outline of a body lies in the middle of the page, with suspects and witnesses standing around it. The player's character features to the right, although as they create this at the start of the game, there's no guarantee it reflects your in-game avatar. The murder itself dominates, with the game's name forming the headline and a picture of the crime scene, Ghastley Manor. Finally, there's a round-handled dagger plunged into the paper and, presumably, the poor victim. Hence, the tomato ketchup.





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